In these pages

A Letter from Rabbi Shimon Felix, Executive Director .................................................. 2

A Letter from Elijah Dornstreich, President of BYFI Alumni Advisory Board & Becky Voorwinde, Director of Alumni Engagement........................................... 3

Picking Sides: Bronfman Alumni Canvass Voters, Dissect Obama’s “Jewish Problem” in 2008 Presidential Race—by Joshua Goodman (BYFI ’93) .......... 4

The Blessings and Burdens of Raising Jewish Children: Reflections from BYFI Alumni and Staff—compiled and edited by Matti Friedman (BYFI ’94)........ 8

- The Communal Uterus by Matti Friedman (BYFI ’94)
- Raising a Jewish Child by Leah Oppenzato (BYFI ’91)
- Down with the Upshurin by Rabbi Avi Katz Orlow (BYFI ’91)
- Growing With My Children: A Mother’s Reflections by Ava Charne (BYFI staff)

A Pluralistic Jewish Stance—by Professor Joseph Reimer............................................. 12

Turning the Outside In: Bronfman Alumni Comedians Discuss American Jewish Humor—by Judy Batalion (BYFI ’94) ................................................................. 14

Amplifying Impact—The BYFI Alumni Venture Fund ...................................................... 18

- Home Front Hearts—Randi Cairns (BYFI ’88)
- Keshet—Idit Klein (BYFI ’89)
- Faith Vote Columbus—Ari Lipman (BYFI ’95)
- Street Sights—Elizabeth Ochs (BYFI ’01)
- One to Watch: Jodi Meyerowitz (BYFI ’05)

BYFI Class Notes.............................................................................................................. 21

Ava Charne, Administrative Director
Rabbi Shimon Felix, Executive Director
Jeff Root, Web Development & Communications
Heather Smith, Accounts Manager
Becky Voorwinde, Director of Alumni Engagement
Barbara Widmann, Administration

BYFI Executive Committee
Elijah Dornstreich (BYFI ’92)
Ned Foss
Dana Raucher (BYFI ’89)

Editorial Support
Matti Friedman (BYFI ’94)
Becky Voorwinde (BYFI ’97)
The Jewish community has always been one with some unique features. Back in Egypt, when the Israelites were first organizing themselves into a nation, Moses asked Pharaoh to let his people go into the desert for a few days to worship God. Pharaoh initially refused, but — after a few plagues — came around and asked, “Who are those who shall go?” Moses responded: “We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters…”

Not used to such inclusivity, Pharaoh doesn’t get it: “Not so; the men may go and worship God, for that is what you request.” Since then, in a world that did not usually include everyone in the community as a real member of that community, the Jewish people have insisted on welcoming everyone into the tribe:

- You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God: your leaders, your tribes, your elders, your officers, all the men of Israel. Your children, your women, and the stranger who is within your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water. (Deuteronomy 9; 9).

- Assemble the nation; the men and the women and the children, and the stranger within your gates (Deuteronomy 31; 12).

Again and again, whenever the Torah wants to assemble and address the entire nation, it includes everyone: men, women, and children, rich and poor, young and the old, the Jew and the “stranger within your gates.”

The Jewish people have not always lived up to this standard of inclusivity. Often, we have behaved more like Pharaoh, excluding the women. We sometimes forget the old and ignore the poor, overlook the young, and ostracize the stranger. We do not always behave in the way the Torah demands of us, by failing to include all elements of the Jewish people in our plans, our concerns, our hopes, and our dreams.

Since its inception in 1987, The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel has tried to model a community that lives up to the words of Moses and to the inclusivity demanded by the Torah. This has been true every year in our choice of a diverse group of fellows, our pluralistic faculty, and even more so in our expanding network of alumni.

Our community becomes more multifaceted every year. If once you were all 17 year-old high school students, you are now 18, 28, and 38 year old scientists, artists, academics, doctors and lawyers, rabbis of all denominations, writers, musicians, comedians, dancers, teachers, businesspeople and so much more. You are single and married, urban and rural, living among Jews or as the only Jewish person for miles around. You’re in San Francisco New York, Haifa, London, and Buenos Aires, and voting for Obama or McCain (OK, maybe I’ve gone too far with this diversity thing, but you get my drift).

BYFI remains committed to this wonderfully dynamic and diverse community. We have recently hired BYFI alumna Becky Voorwinde (’97) as Director of Alumni Engagement, to help keep the community connected, coordinated, and, most importantly, active as a force for the good of American and world Jewry and for the world beyond. It is in this spirit that we bring you this magazine, which provides an opportunity for you to read about what your fellow Fellows are doing, hear what they have to say, and, through the written word, come together as a community.

We hope you enjoy.

Rabbi Shimon Felix
This is an exciting time for the Bronfman Youth Fellowships as we work together – the BYFI Alumni Advisory Board and professional staff, our funder, the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, and our alumni, 573 strong and counting – to identify initiatives and programs that can maximize the impact we make, individually and collectively, in the Jewish community and the wider world.

BYFI means participation in a lifelong fellowship. We are a pluralistic group that can, in Edgar Bronfman’s words, “model a different quality of discourse for the Jewish community.” The BYFI summer program offered a Jewish lens through which to view our worlds. It immersed us in stimulating text study, connected us with the people and stories of Israel, and encouraged us to take seriously our responsibility to society and the Jewish people.

Many of us have found our Bronfman experience meaningful to our adult lives, not only because of the way it shaped us as thinking people and Jews when we were impressionable teenagers, but because of the personal and professional opportunities afforded us by participation in the BYFI alumni community.

This magazine provides a perspective into BYFI’s greatest strength: the diverse and talented people it can bring together. We hope the stories contained in these pages will inspire by offering engaging perspectives and insights from alumni and faculty.

The BYFI alumni community is an outstanding place in which to find Jewish meaning, connection and value in our lives. We invite each of you to join us in any way you wish to move this vision forward – via comments on our website, listserv or by email.

We are grateful to the Bronfman family for their commitment to the BYFI summer program and their investment in the ongoing work of supporting our alumni as they work to make a difference.

Best,

Elijah Dornstreich
elijah@byfi.org

Becky Voorwinde
becky@byfi.org

BYFI is conducting an important survey of our alumni. For instructions on how you can participate, check your email inbox or make sure it didn’t go into your spam folder. Contact becky@byfi.org with any questions.
Picking Sides:
Bronfman Alumni Canvass Voters, Dissect Obama’s *Jewish Problem* in 2008 Presidential Race

By Joshua Goodman (BYFI ‘93)

*Anyone who thinks* Barack Hussein Obama doesn’t have a Jewish problem hasn’t checked their e-mail in over a year.

Whether it’s false allegations he attended an Indonesian madrassa, outrage over racial hatred spewed by a former spiritual advisor or references to the praise heaped on him by Middle Eastern terrorist groups, Obama has transfixed Jewish voters like few Presidential candidates have before. For Jewish voters, small in number but traditionally among the Democrat party’s staunchest liberal base, the controversy and hope he has inspired has exposed hidden fault lines that cut across generational, political and religious lines.

One Bronfman Fellow who has watched this trend from a front-row seat is Adam Magnus. The 1996 Fellow is a partner in Shorr Johnson Magnus, a Philadelphia-based advertising firm that creates advertisements for Democratic candidates.

“Because of my involvement in politics, I get a constant flow of e-mails from friends and family asking me things like whether it’s true that Obama went to a madrassa,” Magnus said. “Quite frankly, I find it disappointing that Jews would believe, much less help spread, rumors that are clearly false.”

As Election Day draws closer, debunking the myths about Obama is getting easier, despite their persistence in the blogosphere and around the pinochle table at Jewish retirement homes across the country.

An on-line straw poll of Bronfman alumni ranging in age from 16 to 39 mirrored broader Jewish voting trends overwhelmingly in favor of Democrat candidates. Of the 116 respondents, 75 percent described themselves as Democrats, and 87 percent said they planned to vote for Obama. If the alumni poll is any indication, Obama’s relative inexperience in foreign affairs or allegations he would endanger Israel appear to have lost traction. In fact, 57 percent of Bronfman alums think
the Democrat candidate’s Middle East policies would be good for Israel, compared to 35 percent in John McCain’s case.

Among the broader Jewish community support for Obama is more tenuous. A September poll of Jewish voters, by the American Jewish Committee, found Jews supportive of Obama over John McCain by 57 to 30 percent with 13 percent undecided. For some, especially Jewish Republicans who have conducted polls of their own, the lower numbers for Obama—compared to 80 percent support for Al Gore and Bill Clinton, as well as 76 percent votes for John Kerry in 2004—point to a credibility gap among Jewish voters. Partisan groups like the Republican Jewish Coalition have tried to capitalize on lingering doubts, real or invented, by canvassing retirement homes in the swing state of Florida, where Jews make up 5 percent of voters.

Anat Maytal, a 2000 Fellow, has found herself reluctantly supporting Obama. During the primaries, she hung posters and badgered friends into attending a speech by Hillary Clinton at Boston University, where Anat is attending law school. When Hillary bowed out, Maytal’s strong views in support of a woman’s right to choose and ending discrimination led her to Obama.

Maytal, who worked as a legislative intern for New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer after graduating from Harvard, called Obama “unknown” and McCain “unacceptable.” She explained, “I know that doesn’t portray Obama in a favorable light, but I’m not very happy with both choices.”

Maytal’s political conversion, albeit forced by circumstances, has been anything but tepid. This summer she was on a host committee of a Jewish Young Professionals for Obama fundraiser event in New York, successfully soliciting several young friends to make a “double-chai” donation of $36 to the candidate’s campaign.

Isaac Dovere, a 1997 Bronfman Fellow who edits two monthly papers on New York politics, praised Obama’s attempt to tackle Jewish anxiety head-on.

The candidate made headlines when he clumsily declared to members of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC that he supported an undivided Jerusalem, a more hawkish stance than is Middle Eastern policy the most important factor in their voting choice.

The tidal shift is generational, believes Dovere, who has an MA in American intellectual history from the University of Chicago and interned on Capitol Hill as a high school student.

“My mother, she loved it when John Kerry’s father was discovered to be Jewish in 2004. Or that Hillary had Jewish relatives,” said Dovere. “I’m 28, and though I’m certainly involved in the Jewish community, those sorts of things don’t register with me. I’m concerned about issues that affect me as an urban, middle-class resident.”

Margie Klein, a fourth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew College in Massachusetts, also rejects using a candidate’s views on Israel as a litmus test. But that doesn’t mean her Jewish identity isn’t a core part of her political activism.

In 2005, she started the non-partisan Righteous Indignation project, seeking to mobilize progressive Jews around issues such as the environment and fighting poverty. A book and a national conference later, the project – supported, in part, by a grant from the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund – has morphed into a small army of 200 Jewish activists registering and educating voters in low-income, minority neighborhoods.

“Jewish voters, in large part, remain committed to the same social issues they’ve always been and will rally behind Obama,” says Klein, a 1996 Bronfman Fellow. “Most of those who don’t are single-issue voters on the right who wouldn’t take a look at Obama anyway.”

Even if the early anxiety caused by Obama’s candidacy has subsided, the question persists: Which candidate would be better for Israel?
Obama’s statements on Israel so far have been in line with the pro-Israel lobby, Klein said. “Nevertheless, most progressive Jewish voters think the hawkish stance of the last eight years hasn’t done so well at creating peace in the Middle East. Because Obama is more accountable to progressive Jewish voters who will have helped put him in office, there is a hope he will be more open to recommendations coming from progressive pro-Israel groups like Brit Tzedek v’Shalom and J Street PAC.”

For Eric Trager (BYFI ’00), who took time from his PhD in Mideastern politics at the University of Pennsylvania to canvass for McCain in Republican-hostile West Philadelphia, Obama’s stance on Israel is less than reassuring.

Writing for Commentary’s “Contentions” blog in January, Trager said Obama’s “whispering of sweet Zionist nothings” to Jewish voters underscores his naïve acceptance of the pernicious thesis that the U.S.-Israel relationship is a product of power politics rather than strategic interests.

Then there’s the question of Obama’s advisors, among them Samantha Power. Before resigning as a senior foreign policy advisor from the Obama campaign in March -- for calling Clinton a “monster” -- Power advocated ending military aid to Israel in favor of economic development for the Palestinians. Sound Middle Eastern policy would require “alienating a domestic constituency,” she was quoted as saying in a 2002 interview.

“These are the sort of things I’d hear in a mosque in Cairo, not what I’d expect from a U.S. political advisor,” said Trager, who studied in Egypt in 2006 on a Fulbright scholarship.

Deby Kanner (BYFI ’88), a self-described pro-choice Republican, said Obama’s affiliation with Reverend Jeremiah Wright is also worrisome. “It doesn’t make me a racist because I’m uncomfortable over Obama’s 20-year membership in a church that gave an award to Louis Farrakhan, a man who praises Hitler,” said Kanner, who was the target of obscenities while participating recently in a pro-McCain march in New York’s very Jewish, very liberal Upper West Side. The church later clarified that it was an affiliated magazine, and not the church itself, that granted the award.

If the elections were held today, which of the candidates would you vote for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCCAIN</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBAMA</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Political survey of BYFI alumni, September 2008

Trager is sanguine about his own candidate’s chances of matching Ronald Reagan’s feat in 1980, when he secured 39 percent of the Jewish vote, the highest tally since Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. George W. Bush captured 22 percent of the Jewish vote in 2004.

McCain, Trager said, is a “run-of-the-mill” pro-Israel candidate, buoyed by his close association with former Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joseph Lieberman. Although Gov. Sarah Palin displays an Israeli flag in her Alaska office, Trager said her commitment to Israel was largely unknown. He and Dovere believe both McCain and Obama are unlikely to try to impose their will in the sputtering negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

“What can any president do with a Palestinian authority beholden to Hamas and an unpopular Israeli government holding onto power?” said Trager.

If McCain is elected, at least one Bronfman Fellow may have an important say in how that policy is drafted. David Adesnik (BYFI ’94), spent four months in Iraq as a civilian analyst with coalition forces before joining the McCain campaign as a foreign policy and national security adviser. He’s unable to discuss his work for the campaign, however.

Whoever wins, the emotions stirred by this election won’t easily fade. Jews long ago stopped being a homogenous group whose vote was determined on the bima (pulpit). Still, ingrained in the American Jewish psyche is the image of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel marching with Martin Luther King Jr. and the sacrifices made by many young Jews during the civil rights battles of the 1960s. Jews of both the left and the right believe our role is to fight discrimination, not fuel it. Obama’s historic campaign, depending on your viewpoint—young or old, hawk or dove, religious or secular—is either a fulfillment of longstanding Jewish values or a threat to them.

Never have our differences seemed starker. The wounds may take time to heal.

Joshua Goodman, a 1993 fellow, will be mailing his absentee ballot to his swinging, home state of Ohio from Rio de Janeiro, where he writes about Latin American politics and economics for Bloomberg News. Prior to moving to Brazil in May, he worked for The Associated Press in Colombia and covered Argentina’s 2001 economic collapse for Business Week.
With the Bronfman program getting on in years and more and more alumni dutifully fulfilling the commandment to be fruitful and multiply, parenthood has become another experience tying Bronfman Fellows together. Even if they’re changing diapers and carpooling in very different places and circumstances, many alums likely find themselves dealing with some of the same questions. One example: in what ways is raising Jewish children as part of a Jewish community a blessing? In what ways is it a burden?

The essays below emerged when we posed that question to four very different members of the Bronfman family: to a father who finds himself raising a pair of identical Israelis, a rabbi looking for new meaning in old traditions, a woman who married a non-Jewish man and brought up Jewish children, and a woman with a Jewish family beyond the boundaries of how Judaism traditionally defined family.
“Excuse me, one placenta or two?” asked the grinning stranger from her car.

She had just stopped beside me on the Jerusalem street where I was pushing Aviv and Michael, my 15-month-old twins, in a stroller. “Two,” I told her, having become used to such questions, “but they’re identical.” After a few inquiries about amniotic sacs the woman seemed satisfied, told me her daughter was expecting twins, and drove off with a friendly wave when the light changed.

This was early this summer, and it was—except, perhaps, for the “excuse me”—a classic Israeli moment. My wife, Naama, and I are regularly asked nonchalantly by strangers whether our twins are the result of in-vitro fertilization, whether they were born via C-section, and when we’re planning to have another child. We are also regularly told by people who stop us on the street how beautiful our children are, how lucky we are, and how we shouldn’t worry because it will get easier soon.

People here are genuinely interested in children, and in your children, and expect you to be interested in theirs. It’s all taken in stride in a way that manages to be simultaneously annoying and endearing. The kibbutz movement may have faded, but in some ways children here remain communal property. Some of this is the nosiness and empathy inevitable in any group that sees itself as sharing a history and a fate. Some of it is more visceral and specific to living in Israel. The latter type was expressed in its rawest form by a frail woman we met outside a hospital in the northern town of Afula when our kids were a few weeks old. She looked approvingly at the two babies in their little red slings and said: “Twins – that’s very good.” Then, gesturing vaguely but ominously with her hand, she dropped her voice and explained why: “They’re going to outnumber us,” she said, meaning our Arab neighbors, the ones who made up half of the hospital’s patients and half of the unfailingly competent and patient doctors and nurses who had just treated her.

I am used to belonging to this raucous and problematic place, and when I moved here from Canada 13 years ago it was my choice. But being a parent means making a choice for someone else, which, it turns out, doesn’t make me feel entirely comfortable.

This uncertainty must exist for most Jewish parents, and for every parent raising children as part of a community, an experience that always means walking a line between comfort and suffocation. The pressure cooker of life in Israel is simply an extreme case that makes the pros and cons starker.

Here, especially for boys, belonging has darker implications. It is assumed they will grow up to be soldiers; if the collective is to survive, our sons will have to serve. This is joked about: “straight to the Navy Commandos!” someone will say as a child crawls ferociously or vaults onto the dining room table. Naama likes to say that by the time they’re 18 things will work out here and they will serve as peacekeepers on Cyprus. But they won’t, and it’s not funny. The detail I remember most vividly from the curriculum of my summer as a Bronfman Fellow is a poem. It was by the Israeli writer Haim Gouri, and it described Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac, the ultimate moment when a Jew realized his son was not his alone.

Abraham had a covenant with God, which wasn’t bad—it’s nice not to be on your own. But it turned out early on, atop a hill in the Promised Land, that linking your life and that of your family to something bigger can also be unbearable.

God stayed Abraham’s hand and Isaac survived, as we know. But since then, the poet wrote, we have been born with a knife in our heart.
So Colleen looked at me across the flower arrangement and said, “Let’s raise the children Jewish.” We weren’t yet married (religiously or legally; we have yet to be married legally, as we live in New York State) and we certainly didn’t have any children. But that conversation was recognizably the start of our path.

We joined a small congregation that meets in a church nearby. The shul is nondenominational and accepts – welcomes – non-Jewish partners, even allowing them to be board members. Our son has been attending Kolot Chayeinu since he was a bouncy little polliwog in utero, where he danced to nignim. He still loves the singing, and crawls in the aisles. We had his naming there and have felt the encompassing welcome of Jeremy’s Jewish community.

Our Reform rabbi (the congregation itself is nondenominational) said that, ironically, according to the doctrine of patrilineal descent, she considers Jeremy a Jewish child. I function as the Jewish father, and we plan to raise him Jewish. However, we wanted to ensure that he would be accepted as a full Jew in the wider Jewish world, so we chose to convert him. Our first hurdle was finding a mohel who would not write “ben Avraham v’Sara” on his bris certificate – however, as it turned out, our Reform mohel agreed with our rabbi that Jeremy didn’t even need to be converted, and his certificate reads “ben Colleen v’Leah.” His conversion won’t be accepted everywhere, given that the Bet Din was a trio of Reform women rabbis, but we feel we have done what we can to give him a solid base in Judaism.

Jeremy’s Judaism has forced me to grapple with my own understanding of what makes a Jew. I see my child as fully Jewish. And yet, I come from a family of “full-blooded” Jews. I still have a nagging sense that there is a racial aspect to Judaism, that I am Jewish not only because of my upbringing, beliefs, and practices, but my curly hair, my Jewish mother, my Eastern European lineage. I look Jewish; Jeremy looks Celtic. I am glad for this challenge, to be pushed past my own stereotypes.

And yet Jeremy may find himself in places where he is not accepted as a Jew. I struggled in my own adolescence with different forms of Judaism that were less than accepting of my own Reform/Reconstructionist background, or my lesbian identity, but no one can ever dispute my Jewish heritage. It’s my job to pass on my strong sense of Jewish identity, just as my mother passed hers on to me; but unlike my mother, I can’t give him the security of the bloodline.

Being a non-biological mother comes with a host of challenges (different, in my situation, from adoption because Jeremy does have a biological parent). I need to pass my Judaism to him from my heart, not my blood or my genes or my curly hair. That is my challenge. And I accept it fully.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

Leah Oppenzato ’91 lives in Brooklyn, New York with wife Colleen and 9 month old son Jeremy. She teaches 7th grade at progressive charter school in Hoboken, New Jersey. She is a member of Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, a non-denominational Jewish congregation in Brooklyn.

Research into the halakhic roots of the tradition got me even more interested. I discovered the links between upshurin and the agricultural laws of orla, which forbids harvesting from a fruit tree within its first three years, and pe’a, which requires a farmer to leave a corner of his field aside for the poor. Parallel to this, a boy’s hair is left uncut for the same period of time (three years), and when it is cut we are required to leave pe’ot, corners (sidelocks). At three years of age, like a fruit tree, a Jewish boy is considered to have reached a landmark. With diapers out of the way, and with his consciousness developing, he is considered ready for learning, wearing tzitzit, and his first haircut.

But I felt that interest alone in the custom was not a good enough reason for us to perform it. Would we even consider this if we had a daughter? But then we began to think about how we could make the upshurin into a full-blown mitzvah that we would want to perform for our children regardless of gender. For us, mitzvot are not just doing what is right or not doing what is wrong according to some other worldly law. Our ideal is to model commitments that are personally meaningful, universally relevant, and distinctively Jewish.

That is how we got the idea to have Yadid wait past his third birthday to get his hair cut. Yadid was going to wait until his hair was long enough to donate. Instead of a strange tradition performed by rote, it would become a religious experience of giving.

I am not sure if he understood at first. But at the time he was undergoing the shift from mere repeater to understanding being and Yadid began to develop a language of altruism. At the party we finally had for him when he was three and a half, his grandmother gave him a tzedaka box, which he began to fill. I asked him why, and he said that when he had hair he gave it to someone who needed it, likewise when he had money he would give it someone in need.

If I have to put my finger on what raising children as Jews means for us, it is this. The community, its history and laws are not just a backdrop to the bedlam of parenting. In this case, they provided a way of getting Yadid to think, before he was even aware he was doing so, about what it means to live a halakhic moral...
existence. We look forward to repeating this ritual with his brother Yishama and some day if we are blessed, also with a daughter. Our upshurin has provided us with a platform for a discussion with a three-year-old about what it means to be a mensch.

Rabbi Avi Orlow ’91 is a Jewish Educator for the Foundation for Jewish Camp. For the past four years, Avi was the Campus Rabbi and Assistant Director of St. Louis Hillel at Washington University. Prior to this experience he held numerous positions as Rabbi, educator, and youth leader. Avi spent 17 years as a camper and then educator at Ramah Camps in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and YUSSR camps in the Former Soviet Union. Avi has a BA in religious studies from Columbia. He was ordained in the charter class at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox rabbinical School. Avi lives in White Plains with his wife, Cantor Adina Frydman, and their sons, Yadid and Yishama.

Growing With My Children: A Mother’s Reflections

By Ava Charne (BYFI staff)

Before my daughters were born, I remember being in synagogue with my father on Rosh Hashanah. The rabbi was talking about how intermarriage will be the demise of the Jewish religion. I could swear he was looking straight at me, and I felt like I was wearing a scarlet letter.

Tina and Robyn are adults now. Their father, Vince, is Italian. My children are a product of intermarriage.

As the rabbi spoke, I remember thinking that if and when I had children, I would go out of my way to make sure they were Jewish, and that I would not single handedly destroy the Jewish people.

Tina went to nursery school at our temple. One Shabbat, she came home and said that she had flowers for our Shabbat table. I asked her where our Shabbat table was, and she told me she thought it was downstairs in the basement. It amazed me that at her young age, she was okay with whatever traditions we did or did not have.

When Robyn was 4, I began to teach kindergarten at our Sunday School. Tina and Robyn would come with me without fail every Sunday morning. They continued to accompany and “assist” me until Robyn graduated from high school. I never imagined that they would go to a Hebrew day school, yet Tina began kindergarten and Robyn followed, and eight years later they graduated.

We became more and more involved in Judaism, and as the years went by, Vince asked me if I made up Jewish holidays -- each year there seemed to be more that we were observing. Tina and Robyn got involved in Israeli dancing, danced with their Israeli dance troupe through high school, and even taught Israeli dancing when they got older. They came with me to Israel for many of the summers when I was there with the Bronfman Fellows. The winter retreats and reunions were so meaningful to them.

Today, both of my daughters are very active Jews. Both took part in Avodah, the Jewish Service Corps, after college. Tina is a special education teacher in Maryland, and Robyn just got a job at the Jewish Community Center in Newton, Mass. as a Social Justice Youth Coordinator.

I think my experience reflects both something of the price of living in a community, and its benefits. The rabbi’s harsh words that Rosh Hashanah showed to what extent Jews believed they must be exclusive to survive. The community excluded people like Vince, who aren’t part of it, and rejected the life choice I made when I married him.

And yet at the same time, our community offered my children so much, and made them the Jewish people they are now. I am very proud of Tina and Robyn, and very grateful for the support of the Jewish community in which they grew up -- their synagogue, their day school, and BYFI.

Ava Charne is the Administrative Director for The Bronfman Youth Fellowships and has been part of BYFI since the fall of 1987. Ava is very proud to say that she personally knows all 573 Bronfmanim. Ava is also the Executive Director of the Capital District Women’s Bar Association. Prior to 1987, Ava was the Training, Safety and Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services. She holds her BA in political science and her Masters Degree in Public Administration from the State University of New York at Albany. She was born and raised in Brooklyn, but has lived in Albany, New York since 1973. In recent years she has developed a strong passion for playing tennis.

Ava Charne with daughters Robyn and Tina and their father Vince
Once, when teaching at Stanford, I befriended a local Reform rabbi. When he learned that I taught for the Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel (BYFI), he told me he was angry at the program. I asked why, and he said it was because on BYFI a young man from his congregation had been taught to put on tefillin. What was wrong with that? His response: it was an effort by Orthodox rabbis to discredit the Reform movement.

That claim was disturbing. I was present when this young man had asked to learn to put on tefillin. He did feel badly that he had never been taught about tefillin. But do tefillin belong to the Orthodox movement? Is wishing to learn more necessarily a negative comment on one’s past learning? Is embracing an age-old Jewish tradition a rejection of Reform or any other religious movement?

I thought of this conversation last week as I was listening to Aliza Kline describe how she, the author Anita Diament, and other pioneers built Mayyim Hayyim, the pluralistic mikveh (ritual bath) in the Boston area. Aliza is a product of the Reform movement and yet has devoted her career to building a mikveh that is used not only for conversion ceremonies and traditional rituals relating to niddah, the menstrual cycle, but also for many healing rituals as well. Aliza talked of her growing fascination and dedication to use of the mikveh and her delight at seeing hundreds of Jewish women discover the power of these traditions for themselves and their daughters. Is Aliza using the mikveh to discredit liberal Judaism? Hardly; her clientele and supporters are overwhelmingly liberal Jews.

Last year I sat on the doctoral committee of Orit Kent, who has completed a stunning study of chevruta learning – a traditional method of studying in pairs – among non-Orthodox university students. Orit grew up Orthodox and has dedicated her career to promoting serious Jewish text study among all Jews. Her theory is that the yeshiva-based interchange of a pair of students working over a traditional Jewish text has great power, when used wisely, in an array of learning contexts. Like Aliza, Orit sees the potential of unleashing the spiritual power hidden in this traditional practice for the benefit of Jews who have never and would never venture into a traditional yeshiva.

A hundred years ago modern Jews were busy reforming Judaism by letting go of many of the traditional practices they associated with old-world religion. They sought an American Judaism that could proudly take its place alongside its sister religions. No beards, Yiddish accents and, for God’s sake, no ancient practices like mikveh or chevruta. We’ve clearly outgrown that need for rational reconstruction. In a post-modern world mikveh and chevruta can proudly take their place alongside back-to-nature health practices and learning methodologies. We are free to reshape the great modern reforms.

We are also free to think past conventional denominational boundaries. The denominations are outgrowths of those modern reforms and have played important roles in giving organizational shape to 20th century American Judaism. But their capacities to play future shaping roles will depend upon their adaptive strengths in responding to what we see every day: seeking Jews in search of deeper meanings who do not care a whit about the labels. They seek Jewish quality and meaning wherever they can find it.

Jewish pluralism, to my mind, is not a movement but a stance exemplified by Aliza, Orit and other outstanding Jewish teachers such as Rabbi Danny Lehmann. Danny grew up in the Conservative movement, was ordained as...
an Orthodox rabbi and was the founding head of the pluralistic Gann Academy in the Boston area. A few years ago Danny, a talented musician, felt the Jewish community needed a serious summer arts program that was kosher and Shabbat observant. He began BIMA at Williams College and pioneered something new: not a Jewish camp with a subsidiary arts program, but a serious arts program for Jewish teens. It is perhaps not surprising that BYFI and its alumni were involved from the beginning, and that the Samuel Bronfman Foundation supports BIMA through the Foundation for Jewish Camping. Two years ago BIMA moved to Brandeis University and has taken its place alongside its sister program, Genesis, a summer program for high school students combining Jewish studies, academics, the arts and humanities.

Watching those two programs closely and comparing them to the great denominational Jewish camps has been instructive. I know Jewish denominational camps that have arts programs and learning methods of which we can be proud. But they are not as strong in two crucial components that flourish at BIMA and Genesis. First is the opportunity for Jewish youth to get to know people who have grown up in other movements. Second is the freedom to explore – intellectually and artistically – beyond the boundaries of any one movement.

The first point seems obvious, but the second deserves more explanation. I have seen participants who have discovered a new approach to Judaism. They entered thinking their religion was a circumscribed system embodied by their synagogue, rabbi and youth movement. They left seeing alternatives beyond those limits; they began to explore the nooks and crannies of our traditions and discover therein hidden treasures not known to their parents and grandparents. We can explore these treasures and learn from them without rejecting our roots. We can expand our Jewish horizons by reclaiming practices and ideas that have fallen away under the rush of modernizing Judaism.

Beyond that, in a pluralistic stance we are free to explore the wide oceans of knowledge and the depths of artistic possibilities and bring those riches to bear on our Jewish lives. Jews have nothing to fear from developing their artistic talents and exploring their intellectual curiosities. Indeed, the Judaism we are seeking is one that is more deeply rooted in its full past and more devotedly open to the insights that await us in this radically new and unknown century. The Judaism that emerges will likely look very different from what we have known. I suspect it may look more like BYFI, BIMA and Genesis than the denominations of the 20th century.

Joseph Reimer is associate professor and former director of the Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service at Brandeis University. Dr. Reimer served as a faculty member on the Bronfman Youth Fellowships summer program for 4 years. His book Succeeding at Jewish Education: How One Synagogue Made it Work won the 1997 National Jewish Book Award. Dr. Reimer has served on the staff of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and on the boards of the Covenant Foundation, the Rashi School and the New Jewish High School. He currently chairs the education policy committee for Birthright Israel, North America. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts with his wife Gail Twersky Reimer and their daughters Tamara and Ziva.
The husband said: Close the window, it's cold outside.
The wife replied: And if I close the window, will it make it any warmer outside?
- Old Jewish Joke

I began performing stand-up comedy in London at a time when my Jewish identity was not on my mind, and certainly not in my set, which is why I was so surprised when it was the first thing industry folk picked up. At early auditions, they would say, as if helping me: ‘Go back to New York.’ Um, OK, I thought, but I’m Canadian. Or, ‘Don’t worry, stick it out – the British public is slowly getting used to Woody Allen.’ Or even, ‘You should really marry a non-Jew - your kids will be much better looking’. I had to face the fact that some element of my yiddishkeit (my pronunciations? gesticulations? attitudes? face?) must have been inadvertently leaking onto the stage. I smacked of Jew. What until then I had taken to be mainstream, as my unremarkable background – I actually did grow up speaking Yiddish – was suddenly my main feature. Jewish meant difference, even in, or especially in, the comedy world. I was being placed as an outsider, viewed as ‘playing a character’, and told to get out.
This reaction, aside from making me aware of my Judaism (doing a better job than most Jewish organizations ever had), also got me thinking about the ways that outsiders might be integral to the very Jewish humor that I was being accused of using. All humor might be seen as coming from an alternate perspective, but Jewish humor has traditionally been known as the humor of the outsider. Among their many attempts to characterize Jewish humor, scholars consistently refer to it as the humor of members of an underclass making jokes in order to feel better about their position, to feel solidarity, to give their nebbish psyches confidence, and, eventually, to overthrow the Tsar.

In America, a well-known brand of outsider-Jewish-neurotic humor emerged in the 1960s, embodied by comedians like Woody Allen and Joan Rivers. Their senses of humor were based on self-deprecation and the discomfort of fitting into one's own skin as well as into society; it's a humor of neurosis, insecurity and assessing position. Allen and Rivers are originally Konigsburg and Molinsky.

But my hunch was that things had changed since the 1960s. Is current American humor post-Jewish? And if so, how has the Jewish humor of the outsider been accepted into and perhaps altered by America, the land of the immigrant outsider par excellence?

I turned to some Bronfman alumni who are also in the comedy industry to find out if and how being a Jew had catalyzed and affected their careers and their senses of humor, and whether Jewish comedy – the humor and the business – could still be considered that of the outsider.

**Hip-Hop, Beavis, and Oysters**

With a completely serious face, eyes facing straight ahead and making no contact with the audience, stand-up Dan Mintz (BYFI ’97) says into the mic: “My grandfather was actually a Holocaust survivor. And you can tell that it really affected him. Because, to this day, he still will not walk into a gas chamber.”

Dan is known for his dead-pan delivery of non-sequitur one liners, and his absurd twists of logic. Dan’s is an intellectual comedy, with a logical, clear and concise writing style, and in which the passion is under-wraps, in tension with the calm of the performance. Regardless of the content (this is one of his sole Jewish jokes), I wondered if he felt his writing and delivery style were Jewish in any way. “Well, maybe,” he thinks. “If there’s a brand of Jewish humor that is based in structural playing, and an emotional remove, a dryness, a Talmudic twisting.

“You get Jewish comedians for the same reason you get Jewish lawyers,” Dan says. “We like to play around with laws, see things from different perspectives.”

The probing attitude of Jewish study, where every point is re-questioned and re-interpreted, and in which one is always taking on ‘outside’ positions, also came up in conversation with comedy hip hop artist Eli Batalion (BYFI ’97), who – among his many accomplishments – also happens to be my brother. Eli recognized that elements of a Jewish childhood had an impact on his comedy writing. Biblical stories, Freudian tales, self-deprecation, major tonal changes in the delivery of lines, and twists of logic that occur in Talmudic reasoning all influence his lyrics. Eli and his writing/performing partner Jerome Saibil often work in a dialectic way, taking on different sides of arguments which are later embodied by different characters.

Hollywood scriptwriter Etan Cohen (BYFI ’91) says his experience of ‘difference’ came not from the studios but from the Orthodox Jewish community where the idea of writing for raunchy cartoons was a touch suspect. His own insecurity about committing acts that were asur, forbidden, and writing for treyf showbiz is what led him to major in Yiddish at Harvard, where he began freelancing for the MTV cartoon Beavis and Butt-Head. “The famous Yiddish writers also grappled with ethical contradictions involved in being religious and writing for the popular market,” he says. Etan found confidence in these stories, in feeling he was part of a tradition that tussled with tradition.

Etan was, however, influenced by the Orthodox community’s distrust for some elements of American culture. Indeed, perhaps the intense examination of the rest of society by the Orthodox community is at the heart of Etan’s comedic perspective. Some of Etan’s earliest comedy work, he jokes, was scribbling parodies of commentary in the margins of his Talmud books at school, adding another humorous layer to the endless Judaic discussion.

Israel-based comedian Yisrael Campbell, who has done shows for the BYFI summer program, also comments on feeling excluded from the Jerusalem Orthodox community because of his career. He grew up Catholic in Pennsylvania and converted to Judaism three times, each with a more stringent rabbi.
Not having been raised Jewish, is his sense of humor Jewish? Yisrael replied that he was brought up by a family of immigrants that used to drive around and point out all the country clubs they weren’t allowed into. “I also didn’t feel like the world was my oyster – or, actually, I felt like it was, but I couldn’t eat it,” he explains. In that sense, Yisrael says, he may have always had a Jewish sense of humor.

In the Out Culture

Yisrael’s experience might demonstrate the palpability of Jewish humor for Americans, and why it was so readily adopted – partly because everyone was and is an outsider, a recent-ish immigrant. Indeed, I wondered how Jewish humor might have been absorbed into the American culture of outsidersness – how easily was it taken up, and how much has it affected and been affected by the mainstream.

Dan says there isn’t a new generation of ‘Jewish’ comedians on the stand-up circuit. “Woody Allen already did Woody Allen; you can’t repeat that,” he says. “Jewish humor is so absorbed into the culture that everyone does it.

“Jewishness is normal in the USA, you don’t have to be neurotic about it. Really, who could still talk about being Jewish on stage? What would you say?”

Eli agrees: “Jews are more integrated, but consequently, I think they have less Jewish-oriented material. To a certain extent, the Jewish stereotypes and jokes to harp on are somewhat clichéd – how many more jokes are you willing to sit through about Jewish mothers, or Jewish guilt?”

But Eli thinks that though Jewish content might be less overt, American comedy preserves some of its Jewish roots in different guises – Larry David’s nebbishness, Seinfeld’s style and the characters created by the Stiller/Rogen/Apatow cabal.

“Watching Eugene Levy in the ‘American Pie’ films suggests to me that America is prepared to handle certain Jewish-isms like mazel tov greetings as part of the American cultural institution,” Eli says. “Unfortunately, it is probably the most boring Jewish elements which are received in this way, but that only means there’s an opportunity for greater Jewish comedy out there, to be exploited by a Jewish filmmaker capable of spinning a classic scene out of a tashlich sequence.”

Some American comedy characters are still Jewish, but it appears they’ve gone from the neurotic to the parodic. Current Jewish Hollywood characters like Adam Sandler and Judd Apatow’s Israeli hairstylist Zohan have traded the nebbish personality for sass and punch. (Albeit, I add, as a caricature of an Israeli, just as Sarah Silverman, unlike Joan Rivers, plays a caricature of a Jewish princess confident in her sexuality and position.) Etan, who is currently writing a Sherlock Holmes film for Apatow, to star Sacha Baron Cohen, says Apatow’s productions have Jewish-heavy staffs, and they’re frank: No one is worried about their Jewish identity on a daily basis, as I had started to?

Dan is flummoxed by the question. While growing up in Anchorage, he felt exotic being a Jew. But since his Bronfman Israel trip - his first immersion into saturated Jewish culture - he has spent time at Harvard and lived in New York and LA, and has been surrounded by Jews. His Jewishness, he says, has “become a background element of my identity.”

Eli’s main experience of Jewish identity outsidersness came from working in his particular genre – hip hop. He is, after all, a Jew in a do-rag. Though he never indicates his religious background in press releases, many critics address it. Eli, however, doesn’t feel awkward about it at all. He takes the act form seriously; his comedy is in his (Jewish-ish) lyrics.

To Etan, being a Jew – even an observant, kippa-wearing one – is not a big issue in LA, where there are kosher groceries at every gas station, and TV station. Not only does it seem to him that Jews work in all aspects of the entertainment industry – writing, directing, producing, acting – but Jewish humor has so pervaded the American comedy industry that around the writers’ table the only way Etan knows if a colleague is Jewish is by their last name. He never feels self-conscious about his Jewish practice, he says, except a tiny bit during Pesach, when at lunch he pulls out a suitcase filled with matza and Diet Coke.

But isn’t writing with Jewish collaborators, like Ben Stiller, a little different than writing with non-Jewish ones, like his mentor Mike Judge, with whom he co-wrote the film Idiocracy and episodes of Beavis and Butt-Head and King of the Hill? No, Etan claims: He sees no difference in the writing, the sense of humor, or the ways of working.

Yisrael, however, says it was his religious observance and his sense of being an outsider in Hollywood that led him to Israel in the first
place. Unlike Etan, Yisrael faced problems being observant in LA in the late 1990s, especially when he didn’t want to film a commercial on the eighth day of Passover. His agent thought he was crazy: “It’s cute when you put on a kippa, but not cute when you turn down work.” In 2000, Yisrael went to Israel for a short reflective break. He ended up studying at the Pardes Institute for several years, and the re-emergence of his stand-up career happened by accident: Pardes asked him to talk about his personal experiences during a program on conversion, the audience cracked up, and next thing he knew he was performing this monologue to crowds in his living room. It soon became a touring piece in Israel and back in the USA, and he’s now preparing for the off Broadway run of his show ‘You Can Never Be Too Jewish’ – an encouraging title that seems to summarize the American industry.

Stars of David

In Joan Rivers’ 2008 West End show, the finale included an enormous cheese plate covered with Israeli flags. The plethora of blue magen davidis made me gasp (as did the plethora of blue stilton). Wow, I thought, never in my life would I use Israeli flags in a show. But, the reason behind this ‘never’ has changed dramatically over the past years. In my previous North American life, I wouldn’t have placed the blue-and-white on stage because I wouldn’t have had much to say about it, despite (or perhaps because of) having gone to a Zionist high school. On the other hand, in my current life in England, the Israeli flag is a loaded symbol, pungently political, and I’m already English enough to feel self-conscious about showing it. I would now not wave an Israeli flag unless I was trying to make a statement - and one akin to appearing on stage holding a Starbucks cup, wearing a red-white-and-blue T-shirt from Wal-Mart, and beating up the infirm. (But, if I did this, it would be as a parody of these typical statement-makers...).

Though I haven’t yet employed the I-flag, I have started to address my Judaism in comedy shows. Having been marked and excluded because of it, my Jewishness has become something I want to talk about, and there seem to be audiences who want to hear about it as well. When there’s something at stake in Jewish identity, when it is a topic of taboo and tension, it also becomes one of jokes.

Rivers’ show, in which she mentions being told early on that she was too Jewish to play anywhere outside New York, makes it pretty clear that her younger self probably wouldn’t have used Israeli flags either. But her comfort at doing so now (and how I envy it), seems to be the comfort of Dan, Etan, Eli and Yisrael playing in America; it attests to how much the American comedy industry and mainstream culture has changed in the past four decades.

With outsider Jewish comedy now comfortably insider, I wonder where it will go from here: Will it turn in on itself? Will post-Zohan Jewish characters be blond supermodels doing tashlich in picturesque brooks? And will ‘Jewish’ humor now emerge only from cultures outside the land of free refills?

—Eli Batalion ’97
The BYFI Alumni Venture Fund enables alumni of the Bronfman Youth Fellowships to support their peers’ cutting-edge initiatives with funding and technical assistance. Since launching our fundraising campaign in 2005, donations from alumni and their families have enabled us to award grants to 33 innovative alumni-led projects that are helping to shape the Jewish community and the wider world.

The $74,850 distributed in small grants is only part of the story. More exciting is the way the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund brings alumni together to share their technical skills and expertise. In the coming years, we will continue to create opportunities for grantees to share successful strategies with one another and for alumni working in all disciplines to offer guidance that helps grantees grow their initiatives and organizations.

All members of the BYFI alumni community are eligible to apply. Grants support projects that seek to promote BYFI’s core values of Jewish learning, pluralism, engagement with Israel, social responsibility or a combination of the above.

Projects that meet the funding criteria have included community service programs, support for innovative Jewish communities, conferences, publications and grants to not-for-profit organizations where alumni serve as formal and informal leaders.

Below are profiles of five Bronfman Fellows who are making an impact.

Randi Cairns
(BYFI ’87)
Home Front Hearts

Randi Cairns (BYFI ’87) is a mother of four children ages 3 to 13 who works freelance jobs while her husband, Captain Ian Cairns, is stationed in Afghanistan training the Afghan National Police. At the same time she is studying full-time towards an MS in Human Services and working to run and expand her not-for-profit organization, Home Front Hearts.

For Randi, Home Front Hearts is literally a labor of love. “My heart has belonged to a soldier for almost fifteen years. Supporting his career, managing things in his absence and working with the families of his soldiers, I’ve become personally acquainted with the challenges faced by military families,” says Randi. Home Front Hearts provides support and resources to the families of deployed service members, especially those from the New Jersey National Guard or Reserves. It works to increase public awareness of the struggles and sacrifices of military families and engages individuals and businesses in building a more military-friendly community.
Home Front Hearts has connected military families in a support network and found businesses to offer them, pro-bono, services they need. It has also sent over 300 boxes of school supplies to needy communities in Afghanistan at Randi’s husband’s request.

The money from a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant enabled Randi to secure official 501c3 status as a public charity. With this in place, Randi can focus on increasing the breadth of her organization and serving the needs of military families. “The BYFI alumni community offers a sense of belonging, a diverse set of skills and experiences, and a connection the likes of which I have not experienced in other communities to which I’ve belonged. Twenty-one years after a summer trip to Israel, it is still a community that I turn to and know that I will be supported.”

In Hebrew school, Randi learned about ideas like tikkun olam (repairing the world) and zedakah (charity). But her understanding of the importance of viewing our responsibilities for each other through a broader lens, one that extends beyond the Jewish community, deepened as a result of being part of an interfaith relationship. “My husband and I are deeply committed to teaching these values to our children,” explains Randi. “The best way I can do that is through my own actions in advocating for others.”

For more information visit www.homefronthearts.org

Idit Klein
(BYFI ’89)
Keshet

Idit Klein (BYFI ’89) is working towards a day when Jews will not fear they will be rejected by their community based on their sexual or gender identity. Since late August 2001 Idit has worked as executive director of Keshet, a grassroots organization striving for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender inclusion in Jewish life. Under Idit’s leadership, Keshet has flourished.

Based in Boston, Keshet first reached a national stage with the release of a documentary the organization produced, titled Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School. The film tells the story of a girl at a Jewish high school who campaigns to establish a gay-straight alliance. The film and accompanying curriculum have been used across the U.S. and internationally. Since its premier, the film has been screened in several hundred communities, including a GLBT film festival in Guyana.

Idit’s work is highly personal. When in college at Yale, Idit experienced a sense of isolation and vulnerability when deciding whether to talk about her sexual identity with leadership at the campus Hillel. This anxiety was generated, she says, by the “complete absence of any signs of GLBT life in the campus Jewish community.” When she did come out, Idit was supported by friends and staff at Hillel particularly Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld and Rabbi Jim Ponet (BYFI faculty). But it concerns Idit that fifteen years later there are still many young people who have the same experiences of marginalization.

The desire to create welcoming environments is what led Keshet to develop the “Hineini Education Project.” Part of this project entails training and peer support to Jewish educators and lay leaders throughout the country to create safe schools and supportive communities. Keshet is also working to strengthen the capacity of Jewish GLBT organizations in other cities. Rather than replicate what Keshet created in Boston, they work to transmit curriculum resources and what they’ve learned about organizing, coalition-building, and facilitating difficult conversations with other groups.

Being awarded a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant is important to Idit on a symbolic level – the funds provided come with the support of the entire BYFI alumni community. “It really means a lot to me to be supported in this work by fellow Bronfmanim,” Idit affirms. Keshet’s mission of inclusion reflects BYFI’s ethos of pluralism and open dialogue. With Idit’s involvement, BYFI hopes to bring programming on GLBT issues to alumni.

One of Idit’s proudest moments was a quiet one, sitting alone at her desk, when she received an e-mail from an 83 year old Jewish lesbian who had just watched Hineini. Her e-mail read, “I have never felt welcomed in the Jewish community. I couldn’t find a shul to say kaddish in for my partner of 60 years after she passed away a couple of years ago. Thank you for showing me that another kind of community is possible.”

For more information visit www.keshetonline.org

Ari Lipman (BYFI ’95)
Faith Vote Columbus

Ari Lipman (BYFI ’95) is an activist and organizer.

As founder of Faith Vote Columbus in Ohio, he is leading an interfaith coalition of religious congregations, neighborhood associations and labor unions committed to increasing voter turnout in urban precincts.

Faith Vote Columbus connects to 130 precincts, mostly low-income neighborhoods, where voter turnout in the 2004 presidential election was below 50% of registered voters. Right now, they’re working with Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner to ensure that the November 2008 election runs smoothly, without the long lines in urban precincts that marred the 2004 vote. His non-partisan organization hopes to maximize the political power of disenfranchised communities.

Ari first developed a passion for social justice as a student at Harvard, where he helped start the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter. “All of a sudden,” he says, “I moved from a nice D.C. suburb to Cambridge. Twenty yards away from my dorm, people were sleeping on grates.” Working with the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Ari helped build a coalition of religious leaders advocating for social change in Massachusetts. With the support of over one thousand volunteers from Boston’s religious communities, GBIO successfully pressured the Massachusetts government to enact statewide universal health care. In May of 2007, the progressive alliance Take Back America acknowledged Ari’s role in this work with its Maria Leavey Tribute Award.

Ari believes that activism is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. “The one thing that exists in Torah that did not exist in any contemporary religious code was the exhortation to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger,” says
Ari, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were labor organizers. “It’s a role of the Jewish community to critique governmental and religious authorities, and to bring them toward a more just vision of the world.”

Ari, who now holds a master’s degree in theological studies from Harvard Divinity School, credits his BYFI summer for helping him develop the strong Jewish identity that guides him in his work with religious leaders. “If I walk into an African-American Pentecostal church, I need to know their tradition, and more importantly, who I am and where I came from. That was a big part of what BYFI did for me.”

With an election year approaching, Ari hopes to build a significant voting bloc around social issues. Faith Vote Columbus has already seen success, working with Governor Ted Strickland to expand health insurance programs to low-income Ohio residents. “If you can claim to hold 20,000 votes in Ohio,” Ari says, “that’s a big deal.”

For more information visit www.ohio-iaf.org

Elizabeth Ochs (BYFI ’01) Street Sights

Elizabeth Ochs (BYFI ’01) is dedicated to advocacy for the homeless. Elizabeth is the coordinating editor of Street Sights, a monthly Rhode Island newspaper written by people who are homeless, or were in the past. The newspaper serves as a forum for the homeless and for advocates, students, state officials, and the general public to share accurate and honest information about what it means to live in the streets and how to help the people who do.

The newspaper was defunct until a little over a year ago, when Elizabeth took charge. Since then, under her direction, it has grown to distribute 2,000 copies a month to Rhode Island’s senators and representatives, all major news sources, and every major homeless shelter and service provider in the Providence area. It also goes to bookstores, libraries and community centers. The paper includes writing, art, news stories, and opinion pieces.

Street Sights strives to build a community of people who, Elizabeth explains, “are not defined by what they lack, but what gifts they bring to the production.” The newspaper aims to empower its reporters. One writer who was homeless when he first got involved started two columns, the “Humanitarian Award” and the “Rainbow Award,” that honor organizations and individuals who change the lives of homeless people in Rhode Island. Today, he has worked his way up to become the magazine’s creative writing editor and is on his way to moving into his own apartment.

The BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant helped ensure that Elizabeth could continue her work with Street Sights. Elizabeth is grateful for this support. “So many individuals in the BYFI community serve as inspiring examples of what it means to live out one’s values and beliefs,” she says. For Elizabeth, Street Sights is her way of repairing the world, living the Jewish concept of tikkan olam; it is an expression of her Judaism and provides fulfillment. Elizabeth explains: “I am in awe of all the people I meet who find a way to better their lives and those around them, even when they are struggling to reach a stable place.”

For more information visit www.street sights.org

Jodi Meyerowitz (BYFI ’05) One to Watch

Jodi Meyerowitz (BYFI ’05) is in her senior year at the University of Oregon, but she has already embarked on an ambitious project whose goal is no less than to “create a unified Jewish community.” Jodi is co-founder of Shomer Achi, an entrepreneurial not-for-profit aimed at fostering personal connections between college students in Israel and the U.S. through community-based learning. She balances her commitment to Shomer Achi with her studies in Economics and Planning, Public Policy, and Management and role as President of Oregon Hillel.

When Jodi immigrated from South Africa to Oregon at the age of ten, her day school peers were not familiar with Jewish life outside of North America and Israel. In college, she saw friends return from organized trips to Israel with a deep love of the land but little contact with Israelis. This concerned her. According to Jodi, “connections based on places are less sustainable than connections built through people.” Jodi’s experience as a Bronfman Fellow taught her this firsthand. While on her BYFI summer, Jodi connected with Israeli Amitim, a parallel cohort of Bronfman Fellows from Israel. She witnessed inter-Jewish dialogue “without the antagonism.”

Jodi plans to continue the pluralistic dialogue she witnessed on BYFI, choosing to pilot Shomer Achi in the Pacific Northwest, a region where many Jews are unaffiliated. She hopes to connect them to Judaism through social justice. Jewish American students from and the University of Oregon will engage in social action projects with Israeli students from the Technion and Haifa University. Students will visit one another’s countries, hear speakers, study Jewish texts, and conduct community service projects related to immigration.

Jodi was recognized for her leadership by PresenTense, a Jewish incubator program. Together with Shomer Achi’s co-founder Jamie Zebrak, she spent 6 weeks this summer preparing the project and learning practical leadership and organizational skills as a PresenTense Fellow. Shomer Achi has also received seed funding from the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund.

Jodi is already getting a sense of what leadership in the Jewish community entails: “empowering others,” and, she says with a laugh, “many early mornings and late nights.”

Donate to support innovative projects through the BYFI Alumni Venture Fund:
www.byfi.org/donate
BYFI Class Notes

1987 Collected by Deb Kornfeld
RANDI CARRIS
My third-born starts
Kindergarten which leaves one lone
munchkin yet unschooled. That means
we now have teens, tweens and toddlers
simultaneously. AgggHHH. i am work-
ing freelance from home, attending grad
g school full-time and will have a Masters in
Human Services specializing in Nonprofit
Management as of the end of the year. I
am anxiously awaiting the safe return of
my hubby from Afghanistan. I am also
starting my own nonprofit (Home Front
Hearts) supporting military families (which
am anxiously awaiting the safe return of
etc. in terms of building the organization
Human Services specializing in Nonprofit
specializing in Nonprofit
was fun to be at summer camp with my kids.
My daughter chava is 9 and she had alast as a camper in a bunk all summer
and ran all over camp. It is also very nice
to be back home in Colorado where I
have lived for 18 years! My independent
outreach nonprofit for interfaith and
Jewish unaffiliated families is doing great.
The need is huge in Boulder and
Colorado for meaningful Jewish educa-
tion and experiences. Anyway I am still
running mountains, teaching spinning
classes, and biking with my kids.

JENNER GERSTEL
I just had a new
baby, Madeleine, at the end of July. She
joins our two year old, Alexandra. My
husband and I live in Natick, MA and I
am on the faculty at Lasell College, a
small college in Newton, MA. A very bor-
ing but rewarding suburban existence!

JENIFER GERSTEL
I just had a new
baby, Madeleine, at the end of July. She
joins our two year old, Alexandra. My
husband and I live in Natick, MA and I
am on the faculty at Lasell College, a
small college in Newton, MA. A very bor-
ing but rewarding suburban existence!

DANIEL HANDLEY
I am in San Francisco
with my charming wife, Lisa Brown. I
have been travelling thither and yon,
performing a piece for narrator and
orchestra (not unlike Peter and the Wolf)
etitled The Composer Is Dead, which I
wrote in collaboration with a com-
paper, and I am at work on my fourth
novel for adults. My wife, an illustrator,
published her second picture book this
year, entitled Sometimes You Get What
You Want, and last year we published
our first book together, The Latke Who
Couldn’t Stop Screaming. Our other
collaboration, our son, Ollie, came into
this world in October. His interest in trains
can generously be described as maniacal.

DAVID JACOBSON
We have now been
in Israel for 3 years, and living in our
newly built home in the Judean hills for
one year. Our kids are happy, adjusted,
speaking Hebrew fluently and speaking
English perfectly with a drip of an Israeli
dialect (which is a real blessing to your
ears). We are both busy with our psy-
critics, and I am enjoying and fulfilled by
my rabbi/psychologist work in a “gap-year”
yeshiva program for American girls in
Jerusalem. Our yeshiva is in... the Gold-
stein youth village! Life in Israel is hectic,
sometimes frustrating, daily grindish like
everywhere, and also a tremendous gift
and inspiration. We have the good for-
tune to live in one of the highest places
in Israel (Neve Daniel in Gush Etzion,
just south of Jerusalem), where we see
Jerusalem to the north, Jordan (Moav
mountains) to the east, the outskirts of
Hebron to the south, and the Mediter-
raneean to the west. It’s beautiful. Always
hoping to see the many Bronfman represen-
tants, Israeli or American who would be
interested in joining us for a shabbat.

SHEILA ELANA JELLEN
I am living in
Silver Spring, Maryland with my husband
Shelly and our three children, Malki (10),
Nava (7) and Akiva (2). I teach English
and Judaic Studies at the University of
Maryland, College Park, and just got
tenure in May. I am currently thinking
a lot about the way literature that was
written in the pre-Holocaust period is
read and taught in an intertextually
(post-Holocaust) period; and I am writing
about a new book. I feel blessed to be able to read
and teach and write for a living, and now
that I have job security, I am taking
a breath and enjoying my children even
more then I was before (if that is possi-
ble). Last summer I traveled to Israel as a
Bronfman faculty member and enjoyed
working with Shimon immensely. I even
get to spend some time in the last few
days of the trip with Avi (who is a Silver
Spring neighbor, although I never see
him here), Shanah Tovav to everyone!

DEBBY KORNFIELD
I was a Judaic director
this summer at camp chi in Washington,
D.C. It was fun to be at summer camp with my
kids. My daughter chava is 9 and she had
a blast as a camper in a bunk all summer
and my son Eli who is 4 was with me
and ran all over camp. It is also very nice
and run all over camp. It is also very nice
to be back home in Colorado where I
have lived for 18 years! My independent
outreach nonprofit for interfaith and
Jewish unaffiliated families is doing great.
The need is huge in Boulder and
Colorado for meaningful Jewish educa-
tion and experiences. Anyway I am still
running mountains, teaching spinning
classes, and biking with my kids.

SARAH LARSON
Rob and I are
busy juggling school, career and family like
everyone else. At 46, Rob courageously
decided to get off the corporate
treadmill and pursue a PhD. It has been
wild to have a student in the house - a
adjustment but also really great to have
him home more. Aidan (5) is going to
Gan Ilan this year - a Jewish kindergar-
ten in Lafayette with a wopping 6 kids!
He had a blast learning new sports
and spending time with friends this
summer. He’s super physical but gets
his emotional insight and intuitiveness
from his dad. Julia (2) starts at Temple
Sinai’s Preschool this year so we’ll be
down to one for the school year. Dassi and
I are both busy with our psy.
critics, and I’m enjoying and fulfilled by my
rabbi/psychologist work in a “gap-year”
yeshiva program for American girls in
Jerusalem. Our yeshiva is in... the Gold-
stein youth village! Life in Israel is hectic,
sometimes frustrating, daily grindish like
everywhere, and also a tremendous gift
and inspiration. We have the good for-
tune to live in one of the highest places
in Israel (Neve Daniel in Gush Etzion,
just south of Jerusalem), where we see
Jerusalem to the north, Jordan (Moav
mountains) to the east, the outskirts of
Hebron to the south, and the Mediter-
raneean to the west. It’s beautiful. Always
hoping to see the many Bronfman represen-
tants, Israeli or American who would be
interested in joining us for a shabbat.

SHEILA ELANA JELLEN
I am living in
Silver Spring, Maryland with my husband
Shelly and our three children, Malki (10),
Nava (7) and Akiva (2). I teach English
and Judaic Studies at the University of
Maryland, College Park, and just got
tenure in May. I am currently thinking
a lot about the way literature that was
written in the pre-Holocaust period is
read and taught in an intertextually
(post-Holocaust) period; and I am writing
about a new book. I feel blessed to be able to read

HALLIE LOEB
It’s finally my turn to shriek,
“I’m engaged!” Other than
the groom’s name, Mark Neuman of
St. Louis, MD, no details to report.
Mark and I have been together for 3+
years, and we are known each other ever
longer. Mark and a very close cousin of
mine met at Ash in Jerusalem (though
now rehabilitated), were roommates in
Chicago, and g-w, will be cousins very
soon. Mark and I am living in St. Louis,
coddling my senile, senior dog and
having lots of fun with his 4 year old
dog. I’m working in conferences and
meetings for a national trade associa-
tion and Mark is an IT specialist with a
consulting firm.

BEN LOWENSTEIN
We are here in
Southern Maine. I am working as a
Cardiologist between two hospitals.
I am both the Director of The Heart
Failure Program for York Hospital and
Director of Non-Invasive Cardiology
at Portsmouth Regional Hospital. I
am staying busy at work and home with
my wife Beth and my children, Ariella
(7), Annabelle (5) and Sam (2). We have
enjoyed life on the ocean this summer
trying to catch fish bigger than the kids.
In addition to my main job, I would love
to have an example to my patients and trained for
my first sprint duathlon/triathlon.

LAUREN ROTH
I am a psychotherapist
in private practice in Lakewood, New
Jersey, where I live with my husband
and my 5 and 1/2 children! Yes, we are ex-
pecting our sixth child in November, Gd
willing! I homeschooled my 10th and 8th
grade sons for the secular studies por-
tion of their day. The rest of their day.
They are in yeshivas here in Lakewood.
I speak in many different venues all
over the United States, about marriage,
parenting, healthful eating, and various
Torah topics, and I love the travel and
truly enjoy meeting people from all
different walks of life. After working on it
for seven years, I finally finished a book,
about the destructiveness of war and
hatred, and the healing power of love.
I’ll start looking for agents and publish-
ers after the baby is born. My husband
is a retinal surgeon and a Professor of
Medicine at Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School. Last but not least, I very
much enjoyed seeing everyone from ‘87
at the 20th reunion!

1988 Collected by Ella Sheintag
LAURA ALPERSON
recently moved to
Albany NY with her husband, Boaz and
two children, Yoav and Matan. Prior to
the birth of her sons, Laura practiced
labor and employment law in New York,
then moved to Portland Oregon. After staying home
for a few years, Laura recently started a
job at the Albany Law School’s Office
of Institutional Advancement as an
Advancement Officer. It’s a wonderful
place to work and a lot more positive
than litigation! RONDA ANGEL ABER-
ing currently lives in Baltimore and
works as a freelance writer and editor
for various educational and academic
publishers. She has three sons (Andrew,
9; Jonathan, 7; and Jeremy, 21 months),
who keep her curious. Ronda has been
involved in founding a new synagogue
in Baltimore, Netivot Shalom, which
espouses a liberal Orthodox philosophy,
and she’s also involved in the Jewish

BYFI.Org
Orthodox Feminist Alliance. She is completing a Master’s degree in Bible from Baltimore Hebrew University.

ROBYN FARBER lives in Irvine California with her husband, Marc Kirshbaum, and two amazing daughters: Zofia (5) and Temma (2). Robyn is calling on all Bronfman who have any expertise in education or fundraising. She is trying to get a “Jewish Montessori Pre-School off the ground”. If anyone is interested in this project please contact Robyn.

MAYA FISCHOFF works at Michigan State University, and spends most of her time with her fiancé who is getting married next month. She is the mother of a 9 month old daughter, Lila. Maya’s latest research focuses on the historical development of contemporary Christian worship music. Her latest project involves the study of Jewish culture, his latest research involves the study of Jewish culture, his latest research involves contemporary Jewish culture, his latest research involves contemporary Jewish culture, his latest research involves contemporary Jewish culture.

TANYA SCHLAM recently completed her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Rutgers and started a research post-doc at the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. She lives in Madison, WI with her husband Jordan Ellenberg who is a math professor at the University of Wisconsin and their 3-year-old son Caleb. JONATHAN TEPPERMAN lives in NYC and is the assistant managing editor at Newsweek International. Jonathan is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.

1989 Collected by Amir Karger AMIR BAR-LEV was married on July 4th. My wife, Jennifer Bleyer, is a recent graduate of Columbia Law School and works at Michigan Newsweek international. Jona-than is responsible for the Asia, Middle East and Africa coverage.

JOSHUA WALLACH and his wife are still happily living in Brooklyn and are totally thrilled to be expecting their first child in January. Josh currently works in the Mayor’s office on Lower Manhattan redevelopement, which includes the World Trade Center site and the neighborhoods around it. ADAM ZAMBOWICZ will be soon moving into a house in the woods in a small town in British Columbia with his wife and 2 children, Sam and Sophie. Adam works as a podiatrist and is also conducting research through a grant from Pfizer. He splits his practice between Sechelt and small isolated, coastal communities.
Central, bringing my children to Israel for the first time. I passed by the Goldstein Youth Village and thought of our great summer of '89, which still to this day, was the most influential summer of my life.

MIKAEL WOLFE I will finally complete my dissertation in Latin American History at the University of Chicago this year. I am also hoping to land a tenure-track job this year (any advice is appreciated from those who have one). When I teach college students these days about the 1980s before most of them were born, I can say I was around and remember the first Intifada, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Reagan/Bush I, the USSR...scary thought.

1990 Collected by Diana Bloom DIANA BLOOM I am living in Tampa Florida with my husband Aaron and our 4 1/2 year old twins Eliana and Gil. I have been working as a trainer and public relations ambassador for Warren Ami Shalom and am also to serve part-time as the rabbi of young adult initiatives with a special focus on greater Los Angeles, overseeing full-time job at the Jewish federation (they were looking for a rabbi!) -- air the family. I filmed as a contestant on Rick Brody give them away fast enough. They are living in brookline, MA. I am the second daughter of Elissa Gootman!). By day, I am living in Park Slope these days with my girlfriend, Nellie Zupancic (in the same building as Elissa Gootman!). By day I am a senior editor at MAD Magazine building as Elissa gootman!). By day, I am living in boulder, Co since August 2007. I moved here with my partner who started graduate school at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am working for a pharmaceutical consulting company, enjoying the clean Colorado air, and doing a lot of biking and hiking.

BETH ZASLOFF The book I co-authored with Edgar just came out—Hope, Not Fear: A Path to Jewish Renaissance. I live in Brooklyn and have two daughters, Gilana, age four, and Naomi, sixteen months.

1991 Collected by Amber Levanon Seligson Greetings from the BYFI class of 1991! We have lots of good news to share from our cohort. Several of us are living in Israel, including Shira Reisman and Yair Silverman. Shira and her family made aliyah a year ago (July 31, 2007) and are now living in Yad Binyamin, a community about 40 minutes west of Jerusalem. Shira has four daughters, Miryam (8 1/2), Hadara (5 1/2), Tikva, and Chedva (twins, 3 1/2) all of whom are integrating beautifully and, G-d willing, she is expecting to welcome her first Sabra child in January. Shira’s husband Daniel is teaching at two Midrashot in Jerusalem and Shira is working for a small UK based consulting firm called Secure Prospects that provides PR, marketing, fund raising and management consulting to non-profits in Israel. Yair and his wife Ilana have been blessed with a gorgeous and sweet baby girl named Ashira Toda, born on March 3, 2008. Big sister Hadar (4) and brother Adin (2) are loving her with great intensity. Two years into their Israel move they are still savoring the joys of Zichron Yaakov. In tragic but true Israeli fashion Yair is working at 4 jobs: building a warm open diverse community in Zichron, directing the Young Leader’s Fellowship for YCT, teaching at the Hodzer Yeshiva of Petach Tikva, and practicing plastic surgery for LSU and Tulane Medical Centers by helping train their plastic surgery fellows. In my free time I travel to destinations as close as New Orleans or as far as New York and Israel. I’m active with the Federation, UJC’s National Young Leadership Cabinet and the JDC. I still enjoy water and snow skiing and running.

RABBI BRETT KICHIVER is the new Senior Jewish Educator for UCLA Hillel in Los Angeles. This pilot program through the International Hillel Foundations educators on five campuses in North America to supervise student interns and provide creative outreach to unaffiliated students. Our goal is to expand the concept of engagement beyond the walls of Hillel, and I am excited to be a part of this new initiative.

LEAH MUNDELL I recently relocated to Flagstaff, Arizona with my husband David and three-and-a-half-year-old Gabriel. David has a faculty position in the physics and astronomy department at Northern Arizona University. I finished my Ph.D. in anthropology four years ago and since then have done some teaching at the University of Arizona and worked as a research consultant for a community organization in Tucson, called the Pima County Interfaith Council. My dissertation focused on relationships between faith-based organizations and public schools in Philadelphia, so I really enjoyed working for an organization much like the one I’d spent so much time writing about. Hopefully I’ll be able to find similar work in Flagstaff.

KIM VAN NAARDEN-RAUN I am still with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention working primarily on the Epidemiology of Autism and Cerebral Palsy (as well as other developmental disabilities). Josh just finished his fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We moved 3 weeks ago to Westfield, NJ. He is still on-staff at Montefiore/Albert Einstein, but is working full-time as a Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist at Morristown Memorial Hospital and has started a private practice in Summit. Sophie is now 3 1/2 and Sam is 17 months and they are such fun.

JOSHUA NEUMAN I am married to Danyelle and we have two girls, Michal is 4 years old and Eden is 15 months old. We live in Manhattan and I am still at the same job I’ve been at for the last 7 years. I was with Bear Stearns Merchant Banking but now that Bear Stearns was acquired by JP Morgan, my group is spinning out to be its own private equity company.

NOAM PIANCO I am living in Seattle with my wife Rachel Nussbaum (BYFI ‘93) and our one-year-old daughter, Yona. I teach Jewish history at the University of Washington and research modern Jewish political thought. Seattle is a wonderful place to live and we would love to encourage east-coast oriented fellows to consider visiting/re-locating to the Pacific Northwest!

JUDITH ROSENBAUM I live in Boston with my husband, Or Rose, and our twins, Ma’ayan and Aviv, who will be two in November. I work as the Director of Public History at the Jewish Women’s Archive. Among my many spare time (ha ha ha), I’m also in the early stages of a book project on definitions of “The Jewish Mother” in the 21st century, which I hope to finish before the century’s end. Our lives are filled with the wonder of toddlerhood, as well as the challenges of the work/life continuum.

DANA WEINBERGER I have been living in Boulder, CO since August 2007. I moved here with my partner who started graduate school at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am working for a pharmaceutical consulting company, enjoying the clean Colorado air, and doing a lot of biking and hiking.

BYFI.ORG 23
priming Israeli executives for social leadership. Also living abroad, MARTA WEISS is in London with her husband, Alex Paseau. Since July 2007, she has been Curator of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She finished her dissertation on Victorian photography and received her PhD from Princeton in June 2008. In the US, JAKE DORMAN is starting his second year as a professor of African American History and American Studies at the University of Texas in Lawrence, which he loves. Contrary to popular opinion, Eastern Kansas is not flat, and in fact he rides a bike to work on top of a steep hill and sees vistas once seen by pioneers on the Oregon trail heading West, by John Brown fighting the forces of slavery, by pioneer families, and by young Langston Hughes, who grew up there in his mother's hometown. Lawrence is a great college town like Berkeley or Ann Arbor, and features lots of microbreweries, cafes, bookstores, record stores, and live music venues. This summer Jake used research grants to visit Jamaica, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, as he wrapped up the research for his first book, to be published by Oxford University Press, entitled Chosen People: Black Jews, black Muslims, and Rastafarians, tracing their rise to images of Islam, Judaism, and the Orient transmitted through freemasonry, Christianity, esoteric faiths, and popular culture from the circus to film, world's fairs, and the Ancient Arabic and Egyptian Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, aka the Shriners. In many ways it was the Bronfman summer when Jake was seventeen that set him on the intellectual journey of comparing black and Jewish nationalisms that led him to where he is, seventeen years later.

Also in the US, BRETT ABRAMS is a UCLA postdoc. He is enjoying LA, and even more so now that he has been married for the past year. He is looking for faculty positions.

ETAN COHEN welcomed a new son in March, Maccabee. He joined his twin sisters Dani and Beverly, whose first daughter Dani (bOuRKOff) Mattheos recently was welcomed. He is thrilled to join the Brooklyn and directs commercials. His own business has been great. I live with my 26-year-old friend, Enry, on one of San Francisco's famously steep hills. If you happen to be at one of San Francisco's farmers markets early one morning and you see a guy who looks like me, looking for the sweetest peaches or the freshest greens, come say "Hi." I'm JOSH FRAIDSTEIN, a director in the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, focusing on studies of incarcerated and homeless populations. Gadi and their daughters Maya and Dalia are looking forward to Amber having a new baby around Halloween. LEAH OPPENZATO (formerly Oppenhein) had a baby in December (Jeremy Angelo Oppenzano). Rabbi AVI ORLOW is thrilled to join the Foundation for Jewish Camp. For the past four years Avi has been the Campus Rabbi and Assistant Director of St. Louise Hillit at Washington University. Avi lives in White Plains with his wife, Cantor Adina Frydman, and their sons, Yadid and Yishama. He is very excited to reconnect with family and friends on the east coast. JESSICA ZELLNER is entering her fourth year as an Assistant District Attorney at the Queens District Attorney's Office. After spending one year prosecuting domestic violence cases, she was promoted to a felony trial attorney in the domestic violence unit and major felonies - everything from attempted murders, burglaries, assaults, robberies, and gun possession cases. She couldn't be happier with her decision to leave private practice!

DANIEL SILVERBERG We just bought a house in DC, which means my family has delayed our triumphant return to California by at least five years! I am a lawyer on the Hill, and my wife, Sarah, just came out with a Jewish children's book titled, "The Bedtime Sh'ma". Check it out on Amazon!

DANA WINBERG I am married to Eugene Shuster, and we live on Long Island with our two children, Michaela (age 7) and Julian (age 4). I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Queens College, and my research areas are healthcare workforce, management, and organization. I am up for tenure this year, and I also work for New York City. I'll probably go to the New York Office of the University Dean for Health and Human Services as the Director for Interdisciplinary Research. I also have a company that conducts program evaluations.

1992 Collected by Eljah Dornestretch Thanks to so many of you for responding with your updates! For my part, I'm living in Philly as I have since college. I have a startup commercial lending business on the side and I also work full-time for a mortgage bank which specializes in government loans. I was on the founding board of A Chance to Heal www.achancetheal.org, which advocates on behalf of those with eating disorders, and I am an early member of The Idea Coalition, which will bring together young Jewish and African-American political and business leaders in Philadelphia, and will have branches soon in New York and DC! I live in the beautiful Fitler Square part of center city, and I welcome any of you to reach out to me if you pass through - as WARREN BRAUNING did recently, when we got a beer downtown and caught up, which was excellent! Starting with Warren, he writes "The big news in our life is the birth, on June 2, of our son Isaac Taylor Braunig, who was brought into the covenant on his eighth day before family and friends. Isaac (like) was born healthy 8 lbs, 11 oz, and has brought so much joy and love into our lives that we barely know what to do with it all. We are slowly settling into the parental routine and enjoying every minute of it. Lindsay and I still living in San Francisco and working as attorneys. I had the fascinating experience of working on my first criminal defense case this past winter, handling a judicial bribery case down in Mississippi. Lindsay is on a lengthy maternity leave now and is looking forward to returning to work next year. Otherwise, we're just enjoying the California sun and doing all we can to elect Barack Obama our next president." DAVID ANDORSKY writes that "I am living in los Angeles as i am in my third year of my hematology/oncology fellowship at UCLA. That's my 4th year of training since med school - I will be glad to be done.) I am married to Joanna Arch, as of March 18, 2007. We recently completed a backpacking trip on the last section of the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada mountains, ending on the top of Mt Whitney, the highest peak in the lower 48 states (14,500 feet)!" JEREMY PERLMAN writes "I'm living out in Los Angeles now. I've become somewhat of a Californian, having been here for almost a decade. I'm a pediatrician. I work and teach in the Neonatal ICU at Olive View-UCLA hospital. My girlfriend just started dental school at UCI. I'll probably go to the New York Office of the University Dean for Health and Human Services as the Director for Interdisciplinary Research. I also have a company that conducts program evaluations."

BYFI Class Notes
nephrology (kidney) fellowship, I took a job at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (part of the Food and Drug Administration). I like the job and it’s nice having more time to spend with my daughters, Molly and Evelyn.”

DAVID PONET writes, “I received my PhD from Columbia University in Political Science in 2006 and am currently the Head of Research at Public Insight LP.” Again, great to hear from everyone from our wonderful BYFI ’92 year! Best, Elijah.

1993 Collected by Jessica Radin Hey Bronfman! I was grateful for this opportunity to hear more about all of you and exchange an email or two. I myself am still in NYC with my husband Simeon who is from England but has been here for 14 years. I have taught at Beacon, a public high school, for the past 8 years but this year I am excited about taking a year off to take classes, do some writing, and take care of some family affairs. I certainly want to go back to teaching but I think I need a short respite. I hope to see you all sometime in the near future.

ALLIE ALPEROVITCH I am living in NYC with my husband, Yuri, and daughter, Emma. Emma is now four and attends pre-K at Ramaz. We recently finished renovating our apartment and hope to stay put for a while. Professionally, I am an attorney at Ropes & Gray. In my “spare” time, I am a member of the BYFI alumni advisory board (and encourage other alumni to get involved). I am also a board member of Darkhei Noam (an independent minyan on the Upper West Side) and of JOFIA (Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance).

ROBERT BRSKIN A lot of things have happened since we’ve last seen each other. I am married and have a son who is about to turn three. We relocated to Jacksonville, FL about a month ago from NC and are trying to stay dry amidst all the storms. I work as a pediatric anesthesiologist and am busy with my new job and learning the new location.

DAVID BELL I have been working as a lawyer in NYC, focusing on corporate law, election law in various states in advance of the 2008 elections and refugee law to resettle Iraqis who have become targets in their own country for assisting the Americans. Work has been interesting, at times taxing, and New York always teaches me something new, but I’m still searching for what comes next.

KATHERINE ECKSTEIN I live in New York City and work at The Children’s Aid Society doing education policy and advocacy. I see Jessica Radin and David Bell frequently. I am hopeful about the upcoming election and incredibly anxious at the same time. I run when I can (I’m trying to be more diligent). I am working on writing projects — both poetry and a book project with two friends about faith, work, and love. As I move further into my 30s feeling more at peace and alive than ever before.

AVLANA EISENBERG I just moved to Ann Arbor where I’m pursuing graduate study in orchestral conducting.

DAN FREEMAN In August I returned to London from Hong Kong where I spent the last year, to take a new job in investment management. I’m trying desperately to break my terrible habit of moving every other year!

DAVID M. GILLERS I am working as a commercial real estate lawyer in the Boston office of Goulston & Storrs, Ra-chel is at the conflict management firm Insight Partners, and our 16-month old Yedidya said “I love you” recently. Granted, it was to his day care friend Taro (and he’s still not sure if we’re related). We continue to actively participate in “Minyan Tehillah,” a shul we helped found which was the happy recipient of a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant several years ago.

JOSH GOODMAN Since May I have been living in Rio de Janeiro, writing about politics and economics for Bloomberg News. I have not been surfing or futovolei (foot-volleyball) but must be the most sun-deprived person living in Brazil. All the same, it’s exciting to watch up-close how Brazil occupies the void left by America’s declining economic influence in the world.

ANDY KATZMAN I am living in San Francisco and recently took a job at Yahoo as Director of Business Manage-ment for Corporate Partnerships. I am also recently engaged to another Bronfman alum, Sarah Cowan (BYFI ’97). No other big news, though I guess that counts as pretty big.

YEHUDA KURTZER I have a lot of updates to share; it’s been an extremely eventful year. About 3 weeks ago Stephanie and I welcomed our second child into the world, a terrific little boy who we named Jesse Michael Ives-Kurtzer. Noah is now 2.5 and is very delighted to be an older brother. We’re still living in Brookline, and I just started my new position as a professor at Brandeis. I’ll be teaching courses in Jewish history and professional leader-ship, and am writing a book for the next few years on “Jewish memory.” I was awarded this position after winning an unusual competition endowed by Charles Bronfman in search of new ideas for the Jewish community, and I am extremely excited to actually be working after years of student-hood. I’m hoping to defend my dissertation in November. Stephanie is now on maternity leave but continues to love her work in real estate development law, specializing in affordable hous-ing. We spent a wonderful Shabbat recently with David and Rachel Milner Gillers who we see regularly in Boston; actually, David and Stephanie now work together.

WAYNE JONES For my part, I’m currently director of operations at Oracle, the software company, where I have been for nine years. I live in Arlington, VA with my partner of fourteen years, Krista, and our very sweet cat Anna. I am currently on the Alumni Advisory Board of BYFI, where I have the role of Chair for Technology and Communica-tions. I have also recently taken a position as Chair of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE).

TALIA MILGROM-ELCOTT This has been a whirlwind of a few years. In May of 2009, Aaron Dorfman and I got married (after a wonderful 15 months of meeting and falling in love). This past July, we had a baby, Oren Milgrom-Dorfman, and in August we came out to San Francisco for five weeks of babymoon, as our friends have taken to calling it. We’re living in a cute cottage in the Mission and are enjoying the good life before heading back to New York and work in late September.

RACHEL NUSSBAUM I am still living in Seattle with Noam Pianko (BYFI ’90) and my daughter Yona, who is turning 1 this month. Like almost everyone else in Seattle, I seem to have caught start-up fever, and two years ago I launched a start-up pluralistic Jewish community called the Kavana Cooper-ative. Things with Kavana are going really well - it’s exciting and gratifying to be in a position where I can think creatively about the Jewish future.

HEATHER SOKOLOFF I moved back to Montreal, my hometown, two years ago, to give birth to my daughter Talia Rose Bukhman, after living in Toronto for six years and working at the National Post, a Canadian daily where I covered education, family issues and provincial politics. Jacob Williams was born this summer. I’ve been mostly doing the mom thing as well as writing lifestyle features on fun stuff like food for the Globe and Mail, the other national Canadian daily. I am loving being back in French Canada, where maternity leave is extra-long, daycare is subsidized and the work day ends at 4pm.

MIRIAM HELLER STEIN I am currently director of Curriculum and Research at the American Jewish University’s School of Education. I finished my Ph.D. in education at Stanford in 2007.
BYFI Class Notes

My husband Jon and I live in L.A. with our three-year-old son Elijah and we are expecting number two God willing in December.

MAX (KAYLA) STRASSFELD I live in San Francisco, where I’ve been the last ten years. Although I left my position as a news writer at the San Francisco Chronicle briefly with BYFI, JED ROHER is back in the loop. He reports that things are going well for him. After college he spent four years as an Audio Engineer/Stage Manager/Production Manager for a touring musical theater productions and regional arts festival. This is perhaps unsurprising for the Bronfman Fellow who was never far from his guitar. What might be more surprising is that after that he attended law school and has settled down in Madison WI as a tax lawyer. He married Nora, an actress he met during his touring years, and they now have a “little fireball of a 2 year old” named Stella. DARA HORNS reports that her family is living in a small town near the beach. She and husband Brendan Schulman have two children, Maya, 3, and Ari, 16 months, and they are expecting a third child in February (Dara requests that I insert eye-see disarming idiosyncrasies here). After an 8 year stint in New York City, Dara and her family are now living in Portland (Norton, 2009), 2008–2009. When she isn’t studying Torah with her husband, she is currently living in Jerusalem where he is a correspondent for the Associated Press. Although he mainly covers local news, he recently had the opportunity to report from Georgia on the conflict with Russia. He is married to Naama and together they chase around 16 month old identical twins, Aviv and Michael. JUDY BATALON lives in London where she is writing and performing. She recently got engaged to Jon Lightman. Mazel tov to Judy and Jon. ILYA FISCHHOFF sends his regards from Kenya where he is doing a fieldwork until November. He is working on zebra behavior and conservation. He writes, “it is nice to be back watching animals in-person, and not only as numbers on the computer. I had forgotten how cute baby warthogs are.” He is disappointed to be voting absentee in the elections but he gets his election news from the Kenyans at the field station who quote him Obama speeches. After he returns from Kenya, Ilya will be living in Hamilton, Ontario (near Toronto) and looking for a postdoctoral fellowship for the next academic year. Anyone who is in the area is invited to visit him. Speaking of Toronto, JACOB (DICKMAN) SADIKMAN wrote in as well. He and his wife Samara live in Toronto with their 16 month old daughter, Yaffa. They are expecting a second child in late December. Jacob is still working as an energy lawyer at the law firm of Osler, where he has been for the past four years. Now to wrap up this batch of letters, I’d like to briefly note that BETH EISENBERG is still working as a litigator at a large firm. ALLISON ISERSON just finished a clerkship with Justice Stevens on the Supreme Court and moved to San Francisco where she is interviewing for jobs. She got married to her husband of 7 months – a fellow bronfman (almost three) year old son isaac. i am living with my husband David and my two children in Cobble Hill. in the “Small World” category is the fact that we will be married by Rabbi Ponet. . .and Dan and David Ponet (Bronfman ’92 are close friends from college. Otherwise, I’m still working as a litigator in the City and spending my free time in search of the ideal chocolate chip cookie.

LAUREN CHERNICK I am living with my husband Aaron Fischman on the Upper West Side and am in the middle of my Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellowship at Columbia Presbyterian.

COREY DATZ-GREENBERG I am working as an organizer with UNITE HERE Local 2, the Hotel workers union in San Francisco. I was previously with UNITE HERE Local 19 in San Jose for 4 years. I also volunteer at the Gay Men’s Health Collective as a volunteer medic. I am not married, nor do I have kids. I do have 2 godchildren and one nephew who are playing the part for me.

LISA EXLER I just moved to Washington Heights with my family, Elie and Maytal (10 months), and would love to have visitors! I’m still working at American Jewish World Service in the education department.

MICHAEL FRAZER I am living in Somerville, MA. My wife Coral and I are expecting our first baby any day now. I’m employed as an Assistant Professor of Government and Social Studies at Harvard University. My first book, The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

ABRAHAM LEVITAN I am closing in rapidly on my eight-year anniversary of being a Chicagoan. Last year, I founded a music-teaching group, Piano Power, that operates in the Chicago suburbs. Meanwhile, my band, Baby Teeth, is in the process of swelling to five members (recession? What recession?!) Finally, I will be marrying the love of my life, Lara Marsh, in the summer of 2009. We have a happy home life with our two cats, Jason Priestley and Luke Perry.
ARI LIPMAN I'm living in Columbus, OH, home of Wendy's, Abercrombie & Fitch, Victoria's Secret, Nationwide Insurance (life comes at you fast!), Ohio State University football, a major league hockey team you have never heard of, and ground zero for the 2008 presidential election. I'm running a non-partisan interfait voter mobiliza-
tion organization (www.faithvotecolumbus.org), and on Friday evenings I play clarinet at one of the three Reform synagogues in town. Even after living and working here for two years I wouldn't quite yet call myself a Midwesterner -- my East Coast roots run a bit too deep -- though for what it's worth I now drive to any destination more than two blocks away.

MELISSA MANN I am living in Brazil, writing lots, cooking lots, and opening an organic coffee lounge fused with an antiques shop in an old house from the 1940's.

NOAM MILGROM-ELCOTT It has been a big year. I turned thirty, got a job (assistant professor of modern art history at Columbia University), almost completed my doctorate (from Princ-
eton), and am engaged to Julie Ehrlich.

DAVID SALVAY I am currently living in Chicago and working to finish my Ph.D. in Chemical & Biological Engineering. My research focuses on the use of synthetic polymer-based scaffolds as platforms for cell transplantation and gene delivery with a special emphasis on the role of the extra-cellular micro environment on mediating transplanted pancreatic islet cell survival and func-
tion. After defending my dissertation later this year, I'll return to medical school and hope to complete my M.D. by mid-2010, after which I plan to enter a surgical residency program.

SONYA SCHNEIDER married her Stanford sweetheart, Stuart Nagae, in 2004. They currently reside in Seattle, WA. Sonya worked for four years at IN-
TIMAN Theatre, and has since left to pursue playwriting full-time. Her play, WAKE, was produced in April 2008. She and Stuart are expecting their first child in October.

MICHELLE STERNTHAL I am currently living in Somerville, MA. I just finished my PhD in Public Policy and Sociology from the University of Michigan and am starting a post-doc at Harvard School of Public Health.

1996 Collected by Matthew Rascoff

ADAM CHRISTIAN I am now happily married to John Volturo. We tied the knot this summer in Los Angeles. I am currently finishing up my urban planning program at Harvard and will be done in June of next year. Here in Cambridge, I have the pleasure of seeing Matthew Rascoff '96 on a regular basis.

JIMMY DAVIS After graduating from college, I lived in Israel for 3 years, completing smicha at Yeshivat HaMi-
vitar (where R' Shimon Felix formerly taught and R' Avi Weinstein formerly studied). Since then, I returned to Cambridge to attend Harvard Medical School and graduated medical school this past June. However, the best part of my post-Brornman years, by far, has been meeting Stephanie Goldglantz while I was a medical student and she a dental student. We married 2.5 years ago. For now, I am doing my intern year at Tufts Medical Center, contemplating if I will head into in-
ternal medicine or surgery. Stephanie is in her second year of residency. We still live in Cambridge and welcome all visitors who may be happening to pass on through.

YONI ENGELHART reports: Tali and I have moved to Brookline, MA and our daughter Yakira turns 18 months this fall. I'm beginning my first year of MBA at Harvard. I recently joined the BYFI alumni advisory board on the fundrais-
ing and projects committee.

DAN GREENSPAHN Having graduated from George Washington Uni-
versity Law School in May, I'm living in Washington D.C. with my wife, Karen Berenthal, and started clerking for a judge on the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in late August. I recently wrote an article on a right to an education and available online at www.smr.com. In early August, Karen and I had the pleasure of hiking and camping in na-
tional parks in Washington, Montana, and Wyoming.

ADINA GERVER I left the Skirball Cen-
ter at the end of May to study full-time, first at Yeshivat Hadar in NYC, and now at the Pardes kollel in Jerusalem. My goal for the year is to learn and write-
two early loves that I've abandoned in recent years. The professional home of my writing projects will be www.
adinagerver.com. (By the time you get this, it may finally be completed.) In the meantime, I am beginning work as an American Jewish World Service Lisa Goldberg Memorial Writers' Fellow. You can subscribe to my work and that of my peers at www.ajs.org/parshah. I was also very gratified to receive a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant to begin work on Borei Hoshech, a project fo-
cused on the interface between tefilah (prayer) and mental health, especially depression. My aim is to launch this project as my own, with the goal of making it collaborative shortly. All in all, things in my life are very good. I would love to hang out with any Bronf-folk who find themselves in Jerusalem.

ARON GOETZL I graduated from law school in 06 and have been in New Orleans clerking for two federal judges since then. I will be getting married in November. These last two years I have basically lived the life that Adam Mag-

nus should have lived in his hometown if he hadn't abandoned it for greener pastures in Washington.

SUSANNA GOLDFINGER I live in Brooklyn and work in advertising which is not really as glamorous as it looks in the movies but still a lot of fun. In my free time I swim with a master's team, salsa, write short stories, and try to escape the city--I recently returned from a hiking trip in the Italian Alps. My favorite activity of all is bumping into Bronfmanim, and I am happy to report this happens fairly often. I am looking forward to our next gathering...

TALI GRIFFEL I am living outside of Hafia with my "chusband" Mitch, our spectacular daughter Shaked, who just discovered the pleasures of sitting still and, our Canaanite hound Yupa. I'm fin-
ishing my last year of Physical Therapy at Hafia U right now. We love guests!

ARIEL GROVEMAN WEINER What can I say? I am busy being a mom to Ilan, 3.5 years old, and to Yael, 11 months old. I am still working at The Samuel Bronfman Foundation and living in NYC.

MARISA HARFORD I married Russ Ag-
dern, a political and labor organizer, on September 2, 2007, and we are living in the Bronx. (BYFI '96 was represented at the wedding by Adina Gerver and Margie Klein.) After seven years of teaching and working as a professional development officer for the NYC public schools, I have accepted a job as the Program Director for a new teacher preparation program, the Urban Teacher Residency. The Urban Teacher Residency aims to integrate graduate coursework with a school residency to support the development of proficient, reflective, and collegial teachers. If anyone is interested in becoming a teacher in NYC (or knows anyone who is), contact me and I will be excited to describe the program in more detail.

MARGIE KLEIN Life is good here in Boston. I'm taking a leave of absence for the semester from Hebrew College rabbinical school in order to direct the Righteous Indignation Project, which is organizing Jewish communities to voice social justice and environmental issues as religious community priorities in the '08 election. The project is related to an anthology I co-edited called Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice (Jewish Lights). In addition, I am still liv-
ing in the Moishe/Kaved House, which is the hub of an amazing community of creative and tikkan olam oriented Jews.

SHEILA NAZARIAN I have been married to Fardad Mobin, neurosur-
geon, for 3 years tomorrow! I have a 13 month old daughter named Leila and am pregnant with a baby boy due Halloween. I have finished general surgery, and I am taking two years for findings research at Children's Hospital Los Angeles before starting 3 years of plastic surgery at USC. Also, I am applying to USC's Marshall School of Business for a Masters in Medical Management.

SOPHIE OBERFIELD I can say that after four years teaching, English and Environmental Studies at the High School for Environmental Studies (NYC public school), I have moved to Stonyes-
ant High School (NYC public magnet school), where I was visiting from the East Coast (Bronfmanim, the best NYC public school I did not attend). I'm teaching ninth and tenth grade English, and I'm very excited about the move. Also, I'm work-
ing part-time on an MA in Theater at Hunter College. I'm working on a paper about two plays that allegorize political conflicts using romantic relationships, one of which generates the Israeli-Pales-
tinian conflict in surprising ways.

MATTHEW RASCOFF I am living in Boston, where I recently started my second year at Harvard Business School. Just this afternoon I had the pleasure of having lunch with Yoni Eng-

gelhart, who just started his first year here. I spend my free time doing let-
terpress printing at the Bow & Arrow Press in the basement of one of the undergraduate houses, and helping to lead the Social Enterprise Club at HBS. I had a magical July and August, interning for the Google Book Search project in Mountain View and living in the paradise that is San Francisco, where I spent many lovely hours with Bronfmanim Sarah Cowan (BYFI '97), Ruth Kaplan (BYFI '95), Andy Katzman (BYFI '93), Yacscob Dyeeck (BYFI '95) who was visiting from the East Coast, and others. Please look me up if you have plans to be in the Boston area.

MICHAL SCHARLIN I just moved to NYC from Jerusalem and am enjoying being closer to family and friends. While a little overwhelmed by the city's "muchness", I'm excited to work in this psychotherapy metropolis, exploring endless options for further training.

MIIRIAM SHEINBEIN I had a baby in the end of December, 2007. I gradu-
ated from medical school in May. My husband (Yaron) and I moved to San Francisco where I started my residency in family medicine.

DAN SMOKLER I am living in New York, working as the Educational Director for Hillel International's E3 project. I'm based at NYU. But most
importantly, I am getting married, Gd willing, on November 2nd to Erin Leib.

1997 Collected by Zina Miller I’m proud to report that the ’97ers are up to their usual impressive tricks. Over the past couple of years, we’ve had several marriages, three babies (although, to be fair, those were all in one family), rabbis ordained, lawyers admitted to the bar, documentaries filmed, scandals reported… Well, we’re a busy bunch. JONATHAN GRIEBEZEL is married to his wife Sarit in Princeton, where Sarit is beginning her second year of a Ph.D. in religions of late antiquity. Jonathan continues to write his dissertation, tentatively titled “Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the ‘Arab-Zionist’ Encounter” at Stanford University, in Late Ottoman Palestine”, and teaches modern Jewish history for Hebrew College’s Me’ah Program. Jonathan has just joined in Princeton by DAVID WOLKENFELD, his wife Sara, their son Alex, and two small dogs in the form of cute twin boys. David was ordained in June as a rabbi by Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT), and he and Sara have begun work as directors of the Jewish Learning Initiative at Princeton University. Their partnership between the Orthodox Union, Hillel, and Torah m’Tzion. And as if we didn’t already know what good taste YCT has in students, they also boast STEVEN EXLER, who will be ordained come June. Steven says that he had a “wonderful summer job” teaching at Yeshiva Hadar in Manhattan and is now working as Associate Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale—”a wonderful job in a wonderful community”. In his spare time, Steven hangs out with his niece Maela and her husband (daughters Lea ’99 and Elie Kaunfer). A few months ago, Steven had the pleasure of attending ELISHEVA GLASS’ wedding to Conan Yuan, which was Elisheva’s big update as well, of course. She enjoyed the sheva brachot organized by BECKY VOORWINDE, who has joined the BYFI professional team as Director of Alumni Engagement. After several years working for the accounting firm Ernst & Young in their Corporate Responsibility group, Becky is enjoy- ing “getting to know all the BYFI alums out there and growing in my understanding of the issues facing the Jewish community today and what we can do to make a difference.” Becky lives in Brooklyn with husband Michael Voorwinde, a civil engineer working on the design of the 2nd Avenue Subway in New York City. Unsurprisingly, it turns out quite a few other ’97ers are in New York these days (what, Jews in New York?), including ALISON HORNSTERN, who is enjoying her second year as a litigation associate in the New York office of Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett. Alison wrote to say she is “delighted to report that I got married in October of 2007” to Andrew Koss and that “married life has been totally wonderful so far.” Another longtime New Yorker (although still boasting that famed southern charm), ANYA KAMENETZ, continues to give talks and make media appearances in connection with her book Genera- tion Debt. In addition to covering the sustainable economy as a staff writer for Fast Company magazine, Anya recently celebrated her second wed- ding anniversary. And lest you think Anya has turned our attention away from journalism, ISAAC DOVERE is the founding editor of two monthly political magazines focused on New York Politics, City Hall and The Capitol. Isaac lives with his girlfriend Sarah a cool “seven blocks from the apartment where we first met.” For years, DAN ADELMAN has been covering an exciting year covering everything from Hillary and Rudy to “Elliott Spitzer’s prostitutes, the budget crisis, several smaller scandals, and a couple of incumbents losing primaries”. He’s a busy man! Finally, remotely married in New York, we find more ’97ers scattered around the country. DONYA KHALILI graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and currently lives in Philadelphia while she works as a law clerk for the Honorable Thomas O’Neill of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She also serves on the American Constitution Society Board of Directors. SARAH COWAN, a graduate student in a PhD program in Demography and Sociology at UC – Berkeley, lives in San Francisco and will marry Andy Katzman (BYFI ’93) in May. Sarah tells us that her program means she “uses statistics to study how and why popu- lations change.” She also extended an invitation to anyone who would like to come visit her in San Francisco. Also on the West Coast is DANN MINTZ, who is doing standup comedy and writing a pilot for NBC while living in Los Angeles—although visiting New York to see his girlfriend. A little farther away, TAYLOR KRAUSS is still in Rwanda working on Voices of Rwanda, an NGO he founded to record and preserve testimonies of Rwandan genocide survivors. He reports that: “Some might think I’m marooned in Rwanda, but when I run into friends and celebrities on the street it tends to feel more like Brooklyn than I bargained for. I’m continuing work with VOR, but to keep myself afloat I pick up freelance shooting jobs. Some of the projects I’ve had a chance to shoot for recently include pieces for NOW on franchise hospital clinics in Rwanda, and women in Rwandan parliament; covering the horrific stories of sexual violence in Congo for Eve Ensler’s V-Day; and this week’s celebrity visitation to bring attention to (RED)’s work with The Global Fund. If anyone wants to visit please let me know, Rwanda has an open door policy, especially if you’re Chinese. I’m not kidding. They have plans to start teaching Mandarin in one of the Universities.” Meantime, TOVA SERKIN has just marked four years living in Israel and was married in March to Yair Yehuda, “an amazingly kind, smart, funny man”. She is the executive director of Yafa-Global network of Jewish leaders and activists (write to her for more information). She explains that “When I’m not doing the ‘Peoplehood thing’, I try to find time to bake, hike, watch bad Israeli reality TV (only to have something to mock), and play competitive Scrabble.” Based in Canada, ELI BATALION has toured the world as one of the two stars of the Sable & Batalion performing duo and just got his MBA. And speaking of rock stars (metaphorical and literal), for the last two years, DAN EDINBERG has toured internationally full-time as bassist of the indie-rock band ZoX. ZoX has finally called it a quits, so Dan will move to NYC in October to pursue film/TV/commercial scoring opportunities and to continue working as a freelance bass player with groups in and out of the New York area. As to your faithful reporter, I (ZINA MILLER) finally finished my JD/MA, miracu- lously passed the New York bar, and promptly fled the country. I’ve just returned from a difficult and fascinat- ing year in Israel/Palestine working as a Visiting Researcher at the Minerva Center for Human Rights at Hebrew University and am now a Visiting Fellow at the Watson Institute for Inter- national Studies at Brown University in Providence, RI. Which just means: apparently I enjoy visiting places.

1998

ASHER AUEL I am in my 5th and final year of the Ph.D. program in Math- ematics at the University of Pennsyl- vania. I am applying for post-docs and other academic jobs for the upcoming year. I just finished a productive sum- mer research stay in Manchester and Bordeaux, and I’m back in Philadelphia.

SARAH D. BELLER After studying Arabic and traveling in Egypt for two months this summer, I am starting the second year of my masters at Ameri- can University in Washington, DC. My thesis research is on evaluation and best practices for arts-based conflict resolution initiatives. I’m still enjoying life in DC and trying to get in as much biking, dancing, and music-making as possible.

SHELLI FARHADIAN I am in my fifth year of a combined MD-PhD program in NYC. My clinical interest is onc- ologic disease, and my research focuses on insect behavior.

NICK FITCH I am in my second year of an Art History PhD at Columbia.

ELI GEITTLER I am the Educator of the Jewish Museum, which opened in April 2008. The Museum looks at American Jewish his- tory through the lens of the Milwaukee community.

SARAH KRAININ I just graduated from CalArts with an MFA in scenic design, and am considering a freelance career in both New York and L.A. as a set designer for theater, and production designer for film. I have also started de- veloping some large-scale, interactive sculptures and installations that deal with space and time, and are based on my previous work in object theater and puppetry.

EMMA KIPPLEY-OGMANN I have finished my fourth year of rabbinical school at Hebrew College in Boston. I am taking a year off from school to work with Breaking the Silence in Jerusalem on a social justice fellowship from the New Israel Fund.

ARI WEISBARD After graduating from law school at Yale this past May, I spent the summer romping around New York, where I ran into Rachel Kort ’98 twice in Brooklyn, once with her husband in tow. Then, after seeing Emma Kippley-Ogman ’98 and Sarah Beller ’98 at the National Havurah Institute and my friends’ wedding in Boston (Emma officiated!), I moved out to Phoenix, AZ. I’ll be clerking here for Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Michael Daly Hawkins. It’s shaping up to be a wonderful year, but there are precious few Bronfmanim out here, so if you’re looking for a home base in driv- ing distance from the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, or Death Valley, perhaps the artist/hippy colony of Bisbee, AZ, don’t be afraid to look me up.

JOSHUA WNUK Still working on my doctorate in chemistry at Johns Hopkins University. My research topic is electron and ion beam induced de- position processes. I married my wife, Danica Horrell-Wnuk, on September 1st, 2008, at B’nai Israel Congregation in Baltimore, MD. We met on j-date two years ago. Danica is working on her doctorate in Cellular and Molecular Medicine at Johns Hopkins University as well. Bought my first house and just finished spending the past year remodeling. Moved in three weeks before the wedding. Currently preparing to present my research at talks in Boston and elsewhere this Fall with the hopes of finishing my degree by next summer.

1999 Collected by Rachel Ann Burstein With almost a decade gone by since our Bronfman summer, the class of 1999 is flung far across the country and the world. ANNIE ROSENZWEIG
wins the award for the furthest from the States among those who responded. That, you’ll be able to find Annie in the States among those who respond.

Hannah Sarvary and Elina Segal are both living in Manhattan. Joseph Beri just moved to Jamaica Plain where he’s been enjoying green spaces nearby, baking bread and reading fantasy and kids’ books. With summer over, he’s starting up with his fourth year of rabbinical school at Hebrew College and preparing for his first yamim noraim gig at the Ottawa Reconstructionist shul. When he’s not studying and learning, Joseph is involved in building Jewish-Muslim relations in the Boston community.

Lev Nelson is also at Hebrew College, beginning rabbinical school as a Wexner Fellow. Both Joseph and Lev are excited to be in residence with Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, who now serves as Dean of the Rabbinical School at Hebrew College, and for the past three years has been a Resident Tutor, Judd Kessler is a PhD in Business Economics at Harvard University. He studies worker motivation and effort. He recently started living part time in Los Angeles, CA where he is conducting dissertation research at a small internet startup.

Susan Pultman just moved from New York to Philadelphia, in order to pursue an MSW and an MEd in Human Sexuality at Widener University. Her goal is to become a sex therapist, though she still dreams of opening a juice bar/cafe. When not at school, Susan is the Director of Programming and Marketing at The Collaborative, a social group for Jewish people in their 20’s and 30’s. She’d “love to be in touch with any Bronfman in Philadelphia!”

Elise or Elise was born in Brooklyn, where being a Red Sox fan is a bit lonely with my fiancé, Jeremy. I’m working on a PhD in American History at the City University of New York Graduate Center and teaching two sections of world history at Brooklyn College. Invitations are out for anyone who wants to deliver a guest lecture!

2000

David Cohen is attending the Postbacalaureate Premedical program at Bryn Mawr College, studying science and preparing to apply to medical school.

Hannah Farber moved to Berkeley in August to begin a PhD in American history. I’m still blogging at jpst.org.

Yakov Fridman-Kohl is living in Jerusalem and studying law and philosophy at Hebrew University. Exchange student from Georgetown Law in Washington DC for the fall ’08 semester.

Michael Gensheimer is currently taking a break from medical school at Vanderbilt to do radiation oncology research in Boston for a year.

Danny Green is now living in San Francisco, working for Current, a global television network and social news website founded by Al Gore. I also recently discovered a third place to call home (other than the place where I grew up and Israel): Black Rock City.

Anat Maytal will be graduating this year from Boston University School of Law with my J.D., Concentration in Litigation and Dispute Resolution. I plan to move back to New York City to work as an Assistant District Attorney.

Alice Phillips is in the fourth year of the philosophy Ph.D. program at Cornell and will probably finish in 2010; my dissertation is on the role of self-sufficiency in the Stoic conception of happiness. And my boyfriend (who was introduced to me, incidentally, by Michael Gensheimer) and I are planning to get married next year, after his conversion to Judaism is complete.

Liba Rubinstein and Micaiah Fitzerman-Blue just finished year two in our Los Angeles adventure. Micah is sloughing through his first feature screenplay assignment, and his production company, 5432 Films, just wrapped up a new web series. Liba still runs the non-profit and political programming on MySpace - with a torrent of activity around the election. A little vacation is long overdue.

Eric Trager and Rachel Lauter have engaged Alyssa Saunders on May 25th, and we live in Philadelphia. I am a PhD Graduate Student in Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

2001

Collected by Ben Magarik

Eli Braun is working in Cincinnati for the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, a criminal justice reform NGO. I’m “advocating” (exact job description in process) to improve discharge planning for mentally ill offenders leaving prison (e.g., enrollment in Medicaid, disability benefits, transitional housing). After finishing at Brown in 2006, I worked for a medical school bioethics department in Syracuse, NY and tutored a GED class at a nearby prison. This past summer, I indulged myself with a hedonistic (but low-budget) trek through six countries in Southern Africa.

Elisabeth Cohen reports: Warren Tusk and I were married this summer. We’ll be living in Philadelphia for the next year, while Warren finishes up law school. I’ve finished my coursework at Princeton, and in the next year hope to pass my general examinations and begin work on my dissertation. I’m still studying medieval Arabic poetry, with secondary interests in medieval Hebrew poetry and modern Arabic poetry.

Melissa Korn I have been in New York City for a little over two years now, first for grad school (Columbia Journalism) and now working as a copy editor with Dow Jones Newswires. I write headlines on market-moving equities news and write features about the intersection of business and education (student loans, for-profit colleges, philanthropy, etc.); definitely an exciting time to be a business reporter. Busy with friends, family, and a little freelancing…life’s good.

Rachel Lautner I have been working for the City of New York for the past two years, most recently as the Senior Policy Advisor to the Commissioner of the Dept of Small Business Services. In my free time I was one of the primary organizers of Brooklyn for Barack, the grassroots organization for the Obama campaign in Brooklyn. I also founded a new political organization in Brooklyn, called New Kings Democrats which recruits and helps people run for local elected office. Check out our website: www.newkingsdemocrats.com. And finally, I just started at Harvard Law School – I’m sad to leave New York (temporarily), but excited for the new adventure.

Noam Lockshin I am engaged to Etta Abramson of Toronto, whom I met at York University. After graduating from York with a degree in math in 2007, I moved to New York where I am working at Sanford Bernstein as a research associate in the oil and gas group.

Ben Magarik I have been working for Digital Divide Data, a non-profit that uses a business model to break the cycle of poverty in the developing world in Asia. I spend two-thirds of the year living in the East Village (of NY), and the other third in Cambodia and Laos. Life in Cambodia is a pretty wild ride,
BYFI Class Notes

I’d love to have BYFI fellows visit me while I’m there.

YONINA MURCIANO-GOROFF is currently on fellowships at Oxford University, where she is completing her doctorate on the history of cancer. She looks forward to returning to Harvard for her M.D. degree. Yonina is especially interested in international health work, and continues to be thankful to Bronfman for the many lessons that she learned about global cooperation.

GABRIEL ROSENHOUSE I am living in Chicago, entering my third year as graduate student in the Committee on Neurobiology at the University of Chicago. My research is, generally speaking, about how neurons exchange information — “synaptic transmission” — in the jargon of the field. More specifically (and jargon-y), I’m studying the molecular mechanisms of vesicle fusion at the cell surface membrane. I hope to have a paper out within the next year.

ADAM SCHWARTZ I just returned from a summer of public health research in rural India to begin my second year of medical school in New York City and working as a clinic volunteer experience with the Department of Health Professions. I am looking for employment or great experiences abroad. In the mean time, I live in Chicago and enjoy the days!

HANNAH MAYNE is living in Canada, figuring out the next step.

NAAMAH PALEY recently graduated from the University of Michigan Honors College and is now spending her year on a Dorot Fellowship in Israel. After studying four years of Arabic in Michigan, Jerusalem and Cairo, she is now working on and studying issues of Arab and Arabic education in Israel.

YONI POMERANZ I am studying in Jerusalem this year at the Conservative Yeshiva and beginning a M.A. at Hebrew University.

KATE BRESLOW After four years of having a go at living in Israel, Leah Breslow decided it was time to head back to Canada to finish her B.A. at York University. She’s looking forward to completing her B.A. in Humanities, especially since it will be taught in English!

NERISSA CLARKE just graduated from Binghamton University with a major in International Development and minors in Economics and Business. She is now living in NYC, working for this coming year at the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, as the Foundation’s Fellow.

JONATHON FEINBERG recently moved to Davis, CA, where he is working for Environment California, trying to get the state to amend the nation’s first statewide and industry-wide cap on global warming. He is considering pursuing a PhD in Environmental Policy.

RACHEL FIRESTONE graduated from Wesleyan in May and is excited to be traveling to India, where she will be starting to work with Ujjivan, an Indian-run Grammeen-based microfinance institution in Bangalore. She has wanted to return to India to do social justice-based sustainable development work since her junior year abroad in Varanasi, India. At Ujjivan, she will be managing and implementing social programs to go along with loans, such as public health seminars, entrepreneurial training, communication skills training, and Hindi and English teaching. She is also hoping to connect with the Jewish community of Kochin, India.

ELISHA FREDMAN is currently pursuing a double-major in Psychology and Neuroscience at Brandeis University. He recently finished a summer of volunteer experience with the Department of Mental Health of Massachusetts for young adults with schizophrenia. This year he is serving as one of twelve university Roosevelt Fellows (academic advisors to underclassmen), working in a neuroscience research lab, and leading a weekly student chavura (study group) about Nevi'im Rishonim, the Early Prophets.

ANNA HUTT FREDMAN recently graduated from Brandeis University, where she studied Psychology, Hebrew, and a bit of Arabic. She has begun a master’s program in speech-language pathology at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Institute of Health Professions.

PETE’R GANONG is starting his last year at Harvard, concentrating in economics and math and hoping to do a thesis on either education or crime. He spent the past summer doing development research in Chennai, India. At the end of the summer, he and Ben Bokser ’03 traveled around Kerala, where they were the ninth and tenth men for Shabbat services at a 300-year-old synagogue in Kochi. The head of the synagogue told them all about the shul’s history, complete with crowns for the Sifrei Torah given by maharajas in the 1800s, and they learned about the Jewish community in India in general. Leah Jordan I graduated this past May from the University of Kansas with a B.A in English and minors in History and French. I’ve just started my first year of five in Hebrew Union College’s rabbinical program. I’m really looking forward to this first year in Jerusalem and then to the four years after that back in the States!

ALANA KINARSKY I have graduated from Loyola University of Chicago with a degree in International Relations. Now I am looking for employment or great experiences abroad. In the mean time, I live in Chicago and enjoy the days!

HANNAH SUFRIN After spending the summer following my college graduation studying Mandarin in Beijing, I am now settling into and exploring my home for the next two years, Guangzhou. As a Yale-China Teaching Fellow, I am teaching courses on famous American orators and Election 2008 at Sun Yat-sen University.

NATHAN STALL I just graduated from McGill this past spring (’08) with a B.Sc. in physiology. I spent this past summer working with AIDS in Ghana on the volunteer summer program. I just started medical school at the University of Western Ontario (UWO).

2004 Collected by Hannah Kapnik

DANNY COHEN Four years on from Bronfman, after spending a gap year as part of the halutzim who founded the Bronfman Bayit—a year of living in Jerusalem with Bronfman chove, filled with learning, volunteering, Hebrew, Israelis, exploration and growth—I am now back in Israel, spending a semester continuing the cultivation of my (religious) identity at Yeshiva Maale Gilboa, a fascinating and colorful place, characterized by a wonderful combination of warmth, openness,
intensity, and sensitivity. At the end of the semester, I’ll return to my beloved University of Pennsylvania, where I’ve spent the past two years meeting people, learning, exploring, and growing. I’m very involved in Jewish life there, also in the promotion of Academically Based Community Service, in the cultivation of a cadre of socially-oriented business students, and in getting to know all kinds of people. I also spent last summer founding a project with a friend called LendForPeace.org, an online site which allows you to lend directly to Palestinian micro-entrepreneurs to help facilitate the economic stability needed for peace. In the longer term future I hope to spend some time consulting in the social sector in Israel, though my ultimate passion is the use of religion in American schools for the purpose of creating citizens. Last summer I worked for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a higher education non-profit, and am seriously considering work in education policy, either higher ed. or K-12. I am editor-in-chief of the BYFI Alumni Fund-supported Fiat Lux: A Journal of Religion at Yale (www.yale.edu/fiatlux) and the short-stop on the Yale Club Baseball team.

ARIEL POLLOCK I am starting my junior year of college with a semester abroad in Cape Town, South Africa. In addition to having a generally enriching and amazing experience so far, I am especially interested in researching Jewish communities and Jewish life during the apartheid era. So far my research is proving to be fascinating and complex. I also just spent a week traveling around Namibia, a country I highly recommend to anyone looking for an adventure. I would love to meet up with any Bronfmanim traveling through South Africa!

MICHAEL POMERantz I am a senior at Yale majoring in Religious Studies and writing a senior thesis on the intersection of religion and politics, particularly the use of religion in American schools for the purpose of creating citizens. Last summer I worked for the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a higher education non-profit, and am seriously considering work in education policy, either higher ed. or K-12. I am editor-in-chief of the BYFI Alumni Fund-supported Fiat Lux: A Journal of Religion at Yale (www.yale.edu/fiatlux) and the short-stop on the Yale Club Baseball team.

ARIEL WERNER I am starting my Senior year at Brown University, where I am concentrating in Political Science and writing a honors thesis on recent developments in the politics of crime and incarceration. I lead a group of Brown women in teaching arts and writing workshops in Rhode Island’s minimum- and medium-security prisons, and I am working with one of my professors to research the 1993 case of a man we believe is wrongfully incarcerated there for a murder he did not commit. I am also organizing on campus and in Rhode Island for Barack Obama, and I’ve been traveling the Northeast since last September trying to share the love. This year I was honored to receive the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, which put me in touch with a community of individuals dedicated to lives of public service and will help me significantly as I journey towards law school. I am planning to move to New York after graduating, where my boyfriend just started NYU Law. I look forward to taking part in the many New York area Bronfman alumni activities.

2005

ARIO FISHER I just got back from being the counselor on this past summer’s Bronfman trip. I am now a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania where I am majoring in Urban Studies.

JORDAN HIRSCH I am now a Junior at Columbia majoring in Modern European History. This past spring, I became editor-in-chief of The Current, Columbia’s journal of contemporary politics, culture, and Jewish affairs (www.columbiacurrent.org). The Current is a recipient of a two of a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant. This past summer, I interned for two months with Dr. Michael Oren at the Shalem Center, a regular speaker on BYFI summers and author of two New York Times bestsellers.

ELSHEVA GOLDBERG is currently beginning her sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania where she is double major in History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC). Last year she went on an Alternative Spring Break trip to Honduras through the American Jewish World Service where she helped a group of Penn Hillel students build a house at the Jewish Orphanage in Tegucigalpa. She also spent three weeks in Israel on a Partnership 2000 program in Philadelphia’s sister city of Netivot before joining her family for their hiking-filled and stunningly scenic vacation in glorious Mount Rainer National Park before returning to Philadelphia. She is the MASA intern on Penn’s campus this year in addition to being a member of Hillel’s Education Committee as well as an active member of many campus organizations. She hopes to study abroad next year in an Arabic-speaking country. She would like to wish the entire Bronfman community a Shana Tova U’Metuca (a good and sweet new year).

MOLLY HOISINGTON I am looking forward to starting my sophomore year at Northwestern University this fall. It will be my first as a member of the fencing team (sabre squad). I will also be volunteering in the pulmonary division of a local hospital, and will further explore various majors compatible with the medical field.

AARON KRIVITZY I am a senior at Middlebury College, a dual Philosophy/English major. I just finished consulting and co-writing a Hunter Press publication, “Educational Opportunities in Integrative Medicine”. It’s a reference guide to the various career opportunities in holistic medicine and the emerging field of integrative medicine. I am beginning my two term senior thesis on Existentialism and Nihilism in Literature. I also just finished a summer of intensive Hebrew at Middlebury. My reggae/rock band, Yuzini, is on the upturn. http://www.yuzini.net/music.html if you want to listen to a soundtrack recording of our last show. I plan to travel to Israel in December on family trip. I am always looking for work in the non-fiction expository writing venue.

YITZ LANDES I am currently finishing up advanced training as a tank gunner in the IDF, and will most likely be starting commander training later this fall. I’m living in Jerusalem, but spending almost 100% of my time in the desert at a base twenty minutes north of Elat.

JODI MEYEROWITZ I currently live in Eugene, Oregon and am in my third year at the Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon studying Economic and Planning, Public Policy, and Management. As a major in interest I am the Community Service Group Assistant in the Residence Halls, I co-teach a class about credit and microlending for first year students, help them adjust to college, and Residence Life. As the student board president of Oregon Hillel, I am often found there taking in the programming of students, and running meetings. I am extremely passionate about these two organizations and positions, however the endeavor that I’m most excited about is Shomer Achi - a year-long tzedek and community service program that connects Israeli and Diaspora Jewry - that a friend and I developed this summer at the PresenTense Institute in Toronto. We’re grateful for the support provided through a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant.

KAITLIN NEMETH Hey everyone! Last year, I had a Grinspan Internship for Israel Advocacy with Hillel International. My focus was on Israel travel and I organized events such as benefit concerts and other fun activities, including a Jewish and Christian Alternative Spring Break trip to Israel. After I completed my internship, I decided to study abroad in Israel. Currently, I’m at Tel Aviv University. I’ll be back at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA sometime in January.

ARIELA ROTHSTEIN I am entering my third year at Yale, beginning the Teacher Preparation Program there, and continuing on as coordinator of Community-Based Learning through Dwight Hall, Yale’s Center for Public Service and Social Justice. I’m looking forward to meeting all the entering Bronfmanim, a new POTUS, continuing a Bronfman tradition of planning programs, and running meetings. I am extremely passionate about these two organizations and positions, however the endeavor that I’m most excited about is Shomer Achi - a year-long tzedek and community service program that connects Israeli and Diaspora Jewry - that a friend and I developed this summer at the PresenTense Institute in Toronto. We’re grateful for the support provided through a BYFI Alumni Venture Fund grant.

MASHA SHPOLBERG I’m currently a junior at Princeton, studying Comparativa Literature in Russian and French, and getting a “certificate” (Princeton’s equivalent of a minor) in painting. I also just got back from a wonderful summer studying film in Poland and am seriously considering continuing on in film studies. For some reason, I found myself thinking back to Bronfman quite a few times during the trip, particularly during the Jewish cultural festival in Krakow. I hope everyone’s doing well, and send all my love,
2006 Contact Nat Gardenswartz

MATÉO AVÉS Last year I spent a semester living in the Bronfman Bayit and learning in yeshivat ertz haztvi. I started at Brandeis University in the Spring where I returned a few weeks ago. This summer I interned at Blue-Star PR, a pro-Israel non-profit in San Francisco, and attended two AIPAC conferences, one with the Samuel Bronfman Foundation.

GABE GREENWOOD lived in Jerusalem for a year with the Bronfman Bayit and is now a freshman at Princeton.

RIVKA BLUTSTEIN lived in Jerusalem for a year with the Bronfman Bayit and is now a freshman at Barnard.

MADELEINE LEVEY lived in Jerusalem for a semester with the Bronfman Bayit, worked for a semester at home, and is now a freshman at the University of Michigan.

TOVA NADLER reports: last year I spent two semesters studying in Midreshet Lindenbaum, a midrasha for advance women’s torah study in Jerusalem. This year I am a first year at Barnard College in New York.

JONAH FISHER spent a year at a Mechina program in Israel. He is now a freshman at Brown.

NATHANIEL GARDENSWARTZ This past year, I lived in Jerusalem as part of the Bronfman Bayit. It was a phenomenal experience. Now I am a freshman at Princeton... an exciting change!

SHANI ROSENBAUM spent a year at Midreshet Lindenbaum, also known at Brevenders, in Israel. She is now a freshman at Brandeis.

EMMA SOKOLOFF-RUBIN I just started my sophomore year at Yale, where I’m enjoying taking classes in as many areas as possible and meeting new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate new people every day. My days here include a mix of new and old interests: I’m still playing clarinet and ultimate...
Bronfman’s commitment to minimizing our impact on environment, this document is printed on paper that contains 30% post-consumer material.